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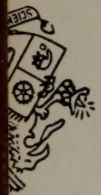
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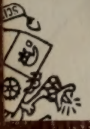
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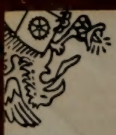
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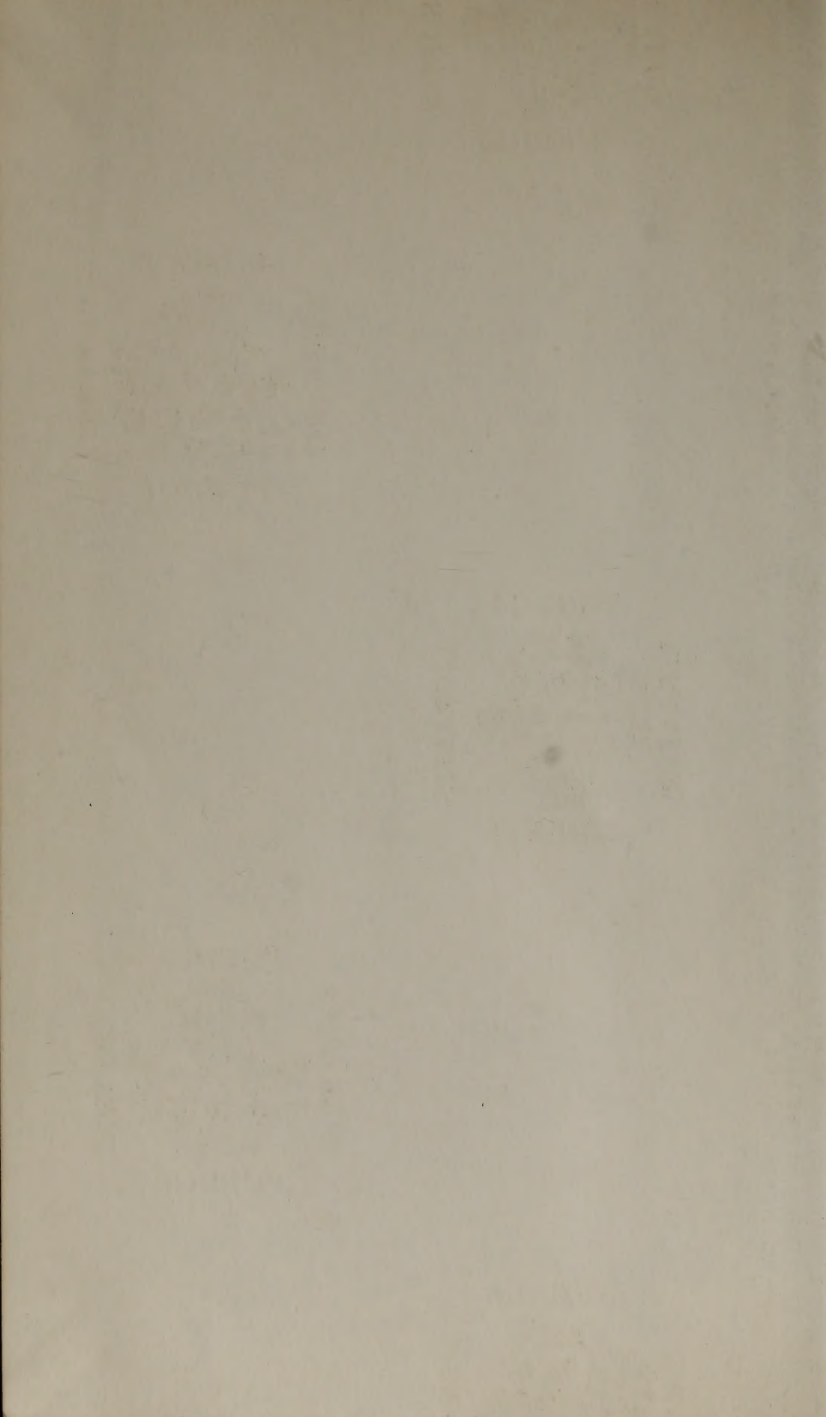
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WITHDRAWN







# THE WISDOM TOOTH

By MARC CONNELLY



FRENCH'S STANDARD LIBRARY EDITION

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# The Wisdom Tooth

*A FANTASTIC COMEDY IN THREE ACTS*

BY  
MARC CONNELLY

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## THE WISDOM TOOTH

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The following is a copy of program of the first performance of "THE WISDOM TOOTH," as presented at the Little Theatre, New York, week beginning February 15, 1926:

JOHN GOLDEN  
Presents  
THE WISDOM TOOTH  
A Fantastic Comedy in Three Acts

By  
MARC CONNELLY  
Staged by  
WINCHELL SMITH

Musical Setting by Werner Janssen  
(In the order of their appearance)

CARTER .....	Stuart Brown
SPARROW .....	William Foran
KNOX .....	Royal C. Stout
BEMIS .....	Thomas Mitchell
MR. PORTER .....	Malcolm Williams
A WOMAN PATIENT .....	Georgia Prentice
HER FRIEND .....	Ellenor Kennedy
A MAN PATIENT .....	William Wadsworth
A SECOND MAN PATIENT .....	Robert Lawler
FARRADAY .....	Charles Laite
MRS. POOLE .....	Kate Mayhew
MRS. FARRADAY .....	Madelaine Barr
SALLY FIELD .....	Mary Philips
KATY .....	Ellenor Kennedy
KELLOGG .....	Hugh O'Connell
FRY .....	Robert Lawler
LALITA .....	Patricia Barclay
GRANDPA .....	Mark Sullivan
GRANDMA .....	Marion Ballou
A CIRCUS OWNER .....	Jefferson Lloyd
HIS PARTNER .....	William Wadsworth
PORKY .....	Eddie Quinn
EVERETT .....	Hugh O'Connell
FIRST CLOWN .....	Stuart Brown
SECOND CLOWN .....	Robert Lawler
ANIMAL TRAINER .....	William Foran
A CIRCUS LADY .....	Georgia Prentice
MILDRED .....	Lenora Philips
ICE CREAM HAWKER .....	Royal C. Stout
SKEETER .....	Edwin Philips

ACT I. SCENE I: A wash room.

SCENE II: A dentist's reception room.

SCENE III: Before the fireplace at Mrs. Poole's.

ACT II. SCENE I: At Mrs. Poole's.

SCENE II: A forgotten circus.

SCENE III: Mr. Porter's office.

ACT III: Before the fireplace at Mrs. Poole's.



## CHARACTERS

SALLY	SPARROW
KATY	PORTER
MRS. FARRADAY	FIRST MAN PATIENT
MRS. POOLE	SECOND MAN PATIENT
WOMAN PATIENT	GRANDPA
HER FRIEND	EVERETT
LALITA	ANIMAL TRAINER
GRANDMA	BARNUM
CIRCUS EQUESTRIENNE	BAILEY
BEMIS	ICE CREAM HAWKER
FARRADAY	FIRST CLOWN
KELLOGG	SECOND CLOWN
FRY	PORKY
CARTER	SKEETER
	MILDRED

## SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

- ACT I. SCENE I: *A wash room.*  
SCENE II: *A dentist's reception room.*  
SCENE III: *Before the fireplace at Mrs. Poole's.*
- ACT II. SCENE I: *At Mrs. Poole's.*  
SCENE II: *A forgotten circus.*  
SCENE III: *Mr. Porter's office.*
- ACT III: *Before the fireplace at Mrs. Poole's.*



# The Wisdom Tooth

## ACT I

SCENE I: *A men's wash room. Four wash-basins are against the wall, which runs diagonally up-stage from down L. There is an entrance in the oblique right wall. In line with the basins are soap bowls, towel racks, etc.*

*A young man, CARTER, is drying his hands as the scene is disclosed.*

SPARROW, *another young man, enters.*

SPARROW. Give me a cigarette, Charley!

CARTER. Did you ever think of buying one?

SPARROW. I don't want to go downstairs to get my coat.

CARTER. I suppose you've got one sewed in the lining? (*Offers him pack of cigarettes, by holding up his wet hands. SPARROW takes package out of CARTER'S pocket, and then goes R., opens door.*) Was that the boss just went through?

SPARROW. Yes. (*Glances out, closes door.*) It's all right. He never comes in here. (*SPARROW lights cigarette—puts package in his pocket, crosses L.*)

CARTER. You know, you owe me a dollar.

SPARROW. For what?

CARTER. For last week.

SPARROW. Didn't I give you a dollar when I got the Giants, Tuesday? You marked me.

CARTER. (*Takes list from his pocket*) Well, I

only got fifteen bucks. It's a good thing Bemis didn't ask for it. I'd have been embarrassed giving him just fifteen. If a guy wins the pool, he wants the whole pool. (*He is examining the list.*) There you are. Everybody paid but you.

SPARROW. You're crazy. (*Takes the list from him*) There's your mistake. Knox didn't pay. You marked him paid—instead of me. Said he'd give it to you this week, didn't he?

CARTER. Oh, that's right—I remember. He got the Phillies for a change.

SPARROW. Well, then you ought to be more careful about that. Don't mark a guy "not paid" when he has paid, and a guy "paid" when he ain't. What do you see about these Camels?

CARTER. You certainly ought to know the different kinds.

SPARROW. Say—Bemis is gonna report off sick. Why don't you give it to him now?

CARTER. Is he? (*Goes to door—calls through the door*) Sst—Knoxie!

SPARROW. That's right. If the boss is going through, let him see you smoking.

CARTER. (*Realizes SPARROW has not returned cigarettes*) And that reminds me— (*SPARROW returns cigarettes. Again talking to the unseen KNOX*) Hey, Knoxie! Give Bemis your dollar, will you, and tell him to get the rest of the money. (*Closes door.*)

SPARROW. Did you notice the Duchess has gone?

CARTER. (*Greatly surprised*) No!

SPARROW. They give her the gate yesterday.

CARTER. She was the swellest looking one we ever had here.

SPARROW. She wasn't any prettier than Miss Kearney was.

CARTER. She had ten times the class that Miss Kearney had.



SPARROW. Yeah! But Kearney got a husband—and this one gets the gate.

(BEMIS enters. *He is a clerk, in his early thirties.*)

BEMIS. Knox says I won again. (*Showing a dollar bill.*)

CARTER. Yeah. Do you want to leave a dollar in for this week?

BEMIS. Sure!

CARTER. (*Counting money*) That makes fifteen, then. Don't do nothing foolish with it. (*Winking at SPARROW.*)

BEMIS. I'm going to give this to a dentist.

CARTER. Was it a tooth was bothering you?

BEMIS. Yeah. I'm gonna have it taken out, I think. It's been hurting all day.

SPARROW. Who are you going to?

BEMIS. Why, there's a Doctor Derby up on West Fifty-eighth Street, near the Circle. He's supposed to be painless. Ever hear of him?

CARTER. Listen—do you want a good dentist?

BEMIS. Who do you know?

CARTER. Dr. Riley, Jr.—79th Street. He fixed my sister up and she's very sensitive. He's supposed to be the best in New York.

SPARROW. Now, listen—do you want *the* best dentist in New York?

BEMIS. Who do you know?

SPARROW. Dr. John Harrigan. Right up on Twenty-second Street. He's the best dentist in New York City. I went to him, and he's fine. (*He indicates with a finger in his mouth*) He put in those two fillings and I thought I was at Roseland.

BEMIS. Didn't hurt at all?

SPARROW. Not for a second. He's very reasonable, too.

CARTER. My man ain't so cheap, but he's supposed to be the best.

SPARROW. I'll give you Doctor Harrigan's address.

BEMIS. He sounds pretty good. (SPARROW takes out a notebook.) I think I'll go up now, and get it over with.

CARTER. Say, did you notice the Duchess is gone?

BEMIS. Who—that blonde?

CARTER. Got the gate yesterday. So Sparrow says. Didn't she?

SPARROW. (*Still searching through the book*) Yeah.

BEMIS. Gee, she was the prettiest one we ever had here! That's too bad. This was her first job as a stenographer.

SPARROW. What do they care? Got a pencil? I'll give you this bird's address.

BEMIS. I'll remember it.

SPARROW. Fifty-seven East Twenty-second Street. Doctor John Harrigan.

BEMIS. Thanks. She seemed like a pretty educated girl.

SPARROW. I guess the boss's wife wouldn't stand for her. He was using her for all his dictation.

BEMIS. You know it don't seem right to fire a girl just because she's good looking. It'll probably give her a black eye getting another job.

SPARROW. If my wife tried to run my business, I'd bust her one.

CARTER. Would you? You ain't married, are you?

SPARROW. No.

BEMIS. All she was doing was trying to get along.

CARTER. You know what I think happened?

SPARROW. I told you what probably happened.

The boss's wife wouldn't stand for her. She was too good-looking.

CARTER. Yeah? Well, there might have been something else, too. Maybe he tried to get fresh with her.

BEMIS. I never knew he got fresh with girls.

SPARROW. Say, you don't know anything. This girl's out of a job, ain't she, when she needed one? Whatever happened, she didn't get much of a break.

BEMIS. You know, he's got no right doing a thing like that. I'd like to tell him so, too.

CARTER. Why don't you? Why don't you walk right into the board room——

SPARROW. Yes, walk right into the next board meeting and say, "Look here, gentlemen. I move we kick President J. H. Porter in the seat of the pants out of here."

BEMIS. That's all right. He's acting unfair, ain't he?

SPARROW. Sure he is.

BEMIS. Well, I wouldn't be surprised if I *did* tell him. In fact I think the next time I see him, I *will* tell him. Who the hell does he think he is, anyway? Picking on a stenographer——

(PORTER enters. He is a well-dressed man of fifty. There is an embarrassed mumbling of "Mr. Porter," from SPARROW and CARTER.)

SPARROW. (With nervous casualness) Just stealing a little smoke.

PORTER. So I see. Bemis, Mr. Jackson tells me you're ill. Is it anything serious?

BEMIS. Why—— (He hesitates.)

PORTER. I say, is it anything serious?

BEMIS. No, sir. It's just a tooth. I'm going to have it taken out or something.

(SPARROW and CARTER exchange looks.)

PORTER. Got a good dentist?

BEMIS. Yes, sir. I got a very good one, Dr. Harrigan up at fifty-eight East Twenty——

SPARROW. Twenty-second Street.

BEMIS. Twenty-second Street.

PORTER. Well, try to get fixed up right away. You know you're pretty valuable at the end of the month. Don't spend the day in here, boys.

CARTER. No, sir.

(PORTER exits. CARTER hunches his shoulders in relief.)

SPARROW. Gee, you certainly did talk up to him. If ever a guy got a bawling out.

CARTER. My God! At one time it looked as if you were killing him.

BEMIS. Well, all right. What would you have done?

SPARROW. (*Lightly*) Nothing. Only you was the one that was shooting off your mouth about it.

BEMIS. Yes, I know I was. But, my gosh, you know how a fellow gets excited.

SPARROW. Sure. Only you said you were going to do such a hell of a lot.

BEMIS. All right. And I decided I wouldn't. Why shouldn't I change my mind? Think I want to go out on my ear? I've been working here seven years and this job's my bread and butter. A guy like me can't take chances like that. Why, if every clerk in New York come out and said what he thought to a boss when the boss did something he didn't like, why, there wouldn't be any of us with jobs. You've got to watch your step. I know I've got to watch *mine*.

CARTER. Still, you're a wealthy bachelor.

BEMIS. As a matter of fact I have got some money. Money I save on this job. And believe me I want to keep on saving it. I don't know where else I'd rate a senior clerk's salary and bonus every year. And how do you know but what I'm intending to get married?

CARTER. Yes, you are!

BEMIS. Well, I am. Even if I don't mention my private affairs down here. A man's got a lot of things to consider.

CARTER. Who is it? Anybody I know?

BEMIS. No. It's a lady uptown. What a darn fool I'd be to go get myself canned. I just felt kind of sorry for the Duchess, that was all.

CARTER. Well, it ain't my funeral. (*Exits.*)

SPARROW. Come on. What the hell! (*Going to door*) I want to take a peek at your ledger— (*Sees he is not coming*) What's the matter?

BEMIS. (*Lightly*) If anybody insults those girls I suppose they ain't any of them got any comeback. I'd like to have told him what I thought about him.

SPARROW. Well, you didn't!

BEMIS. [*Smugly*] No. I did the sensible thing. How much does that dentist of yours charge?

(*BEMIS exits, followed by SPARROW. Black out.*)

END OF SCENE I.

## ACT I

SCENE II: *A waiting room in a dentist's office. An entrance down Left, door Right of center. Against Right wall a small three-shelved bookcase, filled. Large center table, center. Five chairs.*

AS CURTAIN RISES: *Two women, in the chairs to the Left of Center door, are talking. They sit rather stiffly. A dentist's waiting-room seems to demand of them a special deportment.*

FIRST WOMAN. (*Slightly annoyed, glancing at center door*) That's what you get for being polite.

SECOND WOMAN. Why didn't you tell her you had an appointment?

FIRST WOMAN. If I hadn't let her go in the door first, she wouldn't have been first. (*Turning to her friend*) Still, she seemed kind of in pain.

SECOND WOMAN. Well, I hope she won't be long. How long will it take him, do you suppose, for you?

FIRST WOMAN. It oughtn't to take fifteen minutes. He said it'd be all ready and he'd take out the temporary filling and put it right in. (*Looking at watch*) I told Frankie we'd meet her at five-thirty. (*She goes to center table and selects one of a half a dozen magazines. It is "The Classic." She returns to her chair and begins reading it. A middle-aged man enters down Left, with stub of cigar; glances at the women; goes to chair at right side of table; he draws down an extra chair from the corner on which he places his overcoat, takes copy of "National Geographic," sits on chair right, begins to read. He glances at the two women—they are looking at him—he removes his hat.*)

(SECOND WOMAN selects "Saturday Evening Post," examines it as if it were the first issue published, goes back with it to her chair.)

(SECOND MAN enters down Left. He is younger than the first, and apparently in a hurry. He looks at the others; he crosses to chair on which are the hat and overcoat. The FIRST MAN is about to remove them as the SECOND MAN turns and sees a chair Left of table.)

SECOND MAN. Never mind—there's a chair over here. (SECOND MAN crosses Left and sits in chair at Left; looks at his watch, then goes to the table and selects "Yachting." Returns to chair and begins reading it.)

(FIRST WOMAN discovers something amusing in "The Classic," and indicates it to the SECOND WOMAN. They both giggle.)

SECOND WOMAN. Carey ought to see that.

(Knock is heard off left. All look at each other and smile. Pause. BEMIS enters down L. He looks about him somewhat timidly. He stands at door for a moment.)

FIRST MAN. Chair over here.

BEMIS. Thanks.

(The MAN removes his hat and coat from chair. BEMIS sits. The MAN rises, puts his "Geographic" on his chair, places his hat and coat on the table, goes upper Left to waste basket, throws cigar away, returns to his chair to discover BEMIS now examining the magazine.)

FIRST MAN. I wasn't finished with that, neighbor.

BEMIS. Excuse me.

FIRST MAN. (*Expansively*) That's all right.  
(*Sits.*)

(BEMIS looks at the other patients again. He then attempts to interest himself in the physical aspects of the room, unsuccessfully. He turns and sees the bookcase. At first he seems to regard the books as forbidden territory, but curiosity finally compels him to select one of the books, all of which show age and wear. He starts to read it.)

FIRST MAN. (*Genially*) Found something, huh?

BEMIS. (*Absently*) Yes, sir. A book I haven't seen for a long time. (FIRST MAN leans over and reads the title.)

FIRST MAN. Fairy tales. (*The women exchange smiles.*)

BEMIS. Ever read 'em?

FIRST MAN. Sure.

BEMIS. They're wonderful little things.

FIRST MAN. Yes.

BEMIS. (*Self-consciously*) They're fine for kids.

FIRST MAN. Yes, indeed.

BEMIS. Kids like to read about gnomes and elves and all like that.

FIRST MAN. Well, the kids get fun out of it, I guess.

BEMIS. (*Ingenuously*) Oh, it's wonderful when you're a kid and read about them.

FIRST MAN. Yes. (*Pause.*)

BEMIS. You know, some people believe in 'em. (WOMEN exchange glances—they look at SECOND MAN, who smiles.)

FIRST MAN. Who? Adults?

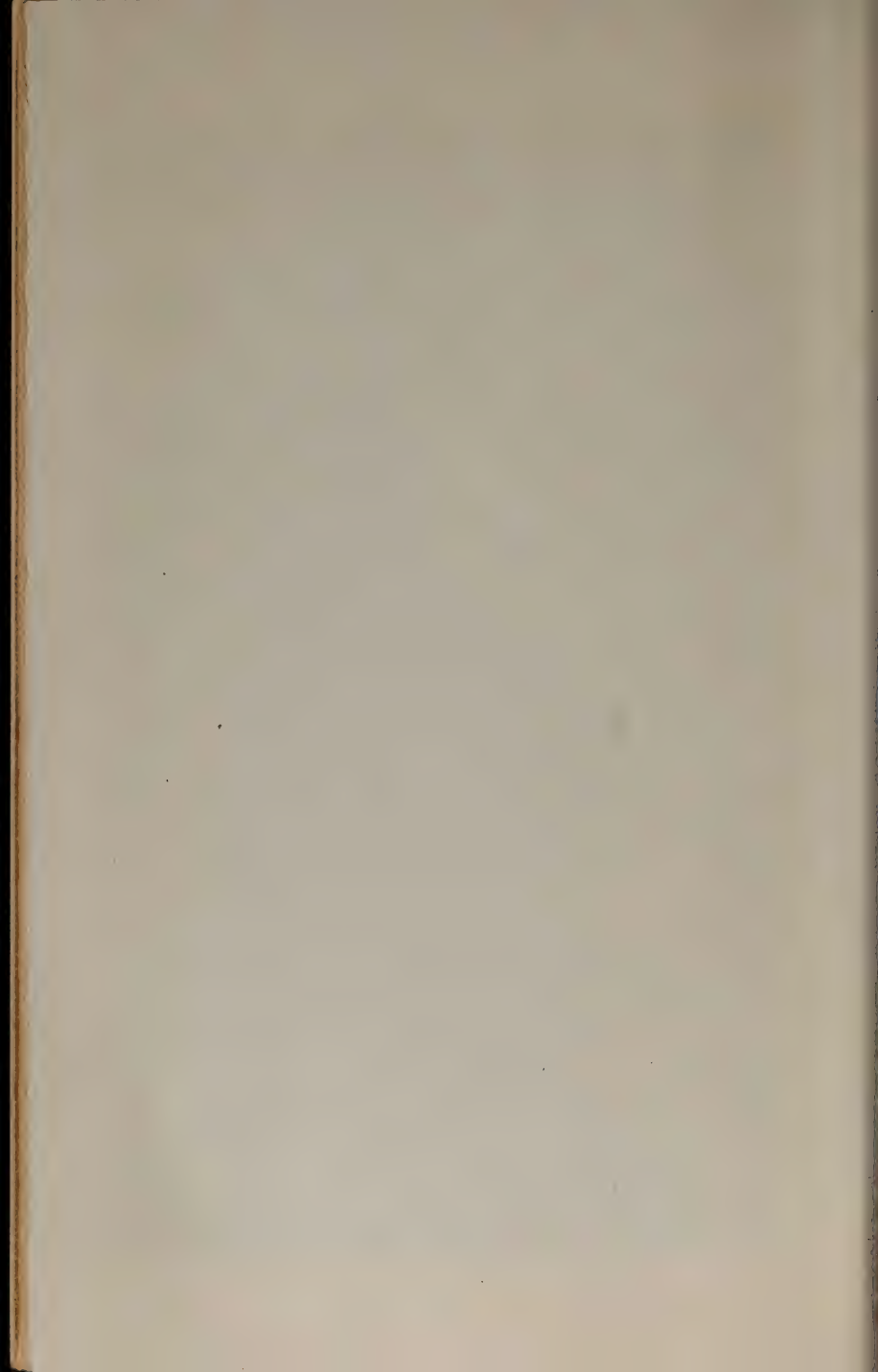
BEMIS. Yes, sir. Some authority on spiritualism





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or something had a piece about them a couple of years ago in one of the magazines, I remember. Did you see that?

FIRST MAN. I don't recall.

BEMIS. This was a very good article. This authority saw some in England. I remember he had some pictures of them.

FIRST MAN. He what?

BEMIS. This writer was some Englishman. He saw some over there. Little elfs, and all. He had some photographs of them.

FIRST MAN. What magazine?

BEMIS. I don't know—one of the thirty-five cent magazines. *Cosmopolitan*—maybe. (*The MAN smiles.*) I'm not kidding.

FIRST MAN. He said he took the photographs?

BEMIS. Now, wait a minute. No, they were photographs taken by some little girl. That was it. This professor just wrote this scientific article about them. A little girl took the photographs. One was standing right in front of her. They were only about that high.

FIRST MAN. This guy claimed they were on the level photographs?

BEMIS. Sure.

FIRST MAN. (*Looks at women and winks*) Science is wonderful. (*The women smile and look at SECOND MAN.*)

BEMIS. It's kinda nice idea, though. I had a grandmother who believed in them.

FIRST MAN. I guess you believe in them yourself, don't you?

BEMIS. (*He really hasn't heard him*) What?

FIRST MAN. Don't you believe in them?

BEMIS. I didn't say I did.

FIRST MAN. You said your grandmother did.

BEMIS. Well, it was different times, that was all. My grandmother could tell a fairy tale wonderful,

but maybe it was me that believed in them then, and I just thought she did.

FIRST MAN. Maybe your grandmother was a little cuckoo. (*The onlookers laugh.*)

BEMIS. No, she wasn't. She was—all right.

SECOND MAN. Don't let them *kid* you, fellow. Why, they're flying around everywhere. (*Laughter again.*)

BEMIS. All I was saying to that gentleman was that it was nice for kids to think of there being a fairyland and all. You probably have ideas that ain't like other people's.

SECOND MAN. (*Looks at first woman and smiles. Then to BEMIS*) Say! Do you believe in Santy Claus?

BEMIS. (*Routed*) That's not the argument we're talking about.

SECOND MAN. Don't you tell a cop you believe in things like that, or they'll put you in the funny house. (*He glances at the two women and gets a laugh of approval.*)

FIRST MAN. You know you're living in New York—not in Podunk.

BEMIS. Lots of people believe in spiritualism, don't they?

FIRST MAN. Sure. *We* all do. Don't you?

BEMIS. What are you trying to do? Just kid me all you can?

FIRST MAN. Certainly not.

SECOND MAN. Take me, for instance. I'm one of them—a medium. (*BEMIS puts the book back in the bookcase. FIRST MAN takes book out of case and opens it.*) Say, read one of them out loud to us—

BEMIS. (*Looks about him, thoroughly badgered. He picks up hat and starts out*) You're fine. (*There is laughter from the others. Black out.*)

END OF SCENE II

## ACT I

SCENE III: *Before the fireplace at Mrs. POOLE'S.*  
*The room is the parlor of a boarding house in the West Seventies. Just behind the curtain line, Center, is the fender, etc. There is a large double door right of Center leading to hall. The foot of a staircase can be seen through the door. The street door is obviously to the right of the hall. Down Right is a large window, curtained, which looks on the street.*

*Up Left is a door leading into dining-room. Against the back wall is a table holding a radio set, a telephone and a small box. A card beside the phone reads: "Please put nickel in box." Above it hangs "The Stag at Bay." Against the wall down Left is an upright piano with several sheets of popular music scattered about it. Just behind the fireplace is a large Victorian sofa. Left of sofa is a small end table. There are several chairs about the room and a table down Right holding art objects.*

*It is an evening in April.*

AS CURTAIN RISES: FARRADAY, a man of forty-five, is telephoning. MRS. POOLE, a middle-aged woman, is looking up the stairs. They wait for a moment, FARRADAY receiver at ear, MRS. POOLE gazing up the stairs. MRS. POOLE comes into the room and starts for the dining room door at Left.

FARRADAY. Hello!

MRS. POOLE. (*Jokingly*) I'm going to save some money tonight.

FARRADAY. I think my wife will be down in a minute.

MRS. POOLE. Well, it's all right. It's just that it's the kind of soup she likes so much. (*At door, Left.*) Are you sure your wife heard the bell?

FARRADAY. Oh, yes. She'll be here in a minute. (*Into telephone*) Hello! (*To MRS. POOLE*) You don't know who wanted me here?

MRS. POOLE. It sounded like that gentleman that called you last night. (*MRS. POOLE exits.*)

FARRADAY. (*Into telephone*) Hello! Yes. Speaking. Yes, Pat. Certainly, print it in four colors. (*Pause.*) What? If he wants it that way it will look like an art calendar. (*Pause.*) Are you at your office? (*Pause.*) I'm not going to let him botch a good job. Look for that order, will you? Thanks. (*He holds the receiver as MRS. FARRADAY enters. She is a pleasant young woman.*) Your dinner's getting cold, dear.

MRS. FARRADAY. So's yours, isn't it?

FARRADAY. I'm having a good time here. Fillmore wants to do that poster in three colors.

MRS. FARRADAY. Oh, dear!

FARRADAY. You make a half-way decent drawing and some damn fool wants to ruin it. I don't want to hear of another commercial job for a year.

MRS. FARRADAY. You will, if you want your angel of delight to eat.

FARRADAY. Go on in and keep in practice. (*MRS. FARRADAY crosses to dining-room.*)

MRS. FARRADAY. Don't let him keep you too long. We want to go to the movies.

(*MRS. FARRADAY meets SALLY FIELDS in doorway. SALLY is about thirty. She is a tired newspaper writer.*)

SALLY. Good evening. You're a bit late for roll call. (*Crossing to sofa.*)

MRS. FARRADAY. Why are you leaving us?

SALLY. I found I wasn't hungry.

MRS. FARRADAY. You're not ill?

SALLY. No.

(*KATIE enters from dining-room.*)

KATIE. Now, Mrs. Farraday—

MRS. FARRADAY. Will you forgive me, Katie?

KATIE. Yes, ma'am, if you'll go in now.

MRS. FARRADAY. I'm so sorry. (*Exits into dining-room.*)

KATIE. Ain't you comin', Mr. Farraday?

FARRADAY. Yes, Katie, if I'm not hung up here all evening.

KATIE. Didn't Mr. Bemis come in, Miss Field?

SALLY. I haven't seen him.

KATIE. He had a toothache this morning.

SALLY. Did he?

KATIE. He hardly ate any breakfast. Just took orange juice. (*KATIE exits into dining-room.*)

FARRADAY. You're home early tonight, aren't you?

SALLY. I was up town covering a woman's club meeting.

FARRADAY. Was that your interview with our latest bigamist tonight?

SALLY. No. I may have a chance to interview one of the weeping wives tomorrow. I do what is called *second string* sob stuff.

FARRADAY. (*Into phone*) Yes, Pat— (*Pause.*) I thought so. Show it to him tomorrow, will you? I'll see you when I come down town. Thanks. (*Puts up receiver.*)

SALLY. You're going to have a cold dinner.

FARRADAY. (*Going to dining-room*) I like it cold. (*Exit.*)

BEMIS. (*Entering*) Hello!

SALLY. I hear you had a toothache.

BEMIS. Yes, a little one. I've just been at the dentist's.

SALLY. Is it anything serious?

BEMIS. No, it's just a wisdom tooth coming through, I guess.

SALLY. What did the dentist say?

BEMIS. I didn't wait.

SALLY. Why not?

BEMIS. When I got there it stopped aching. There was a whole crowd ahead of me. (*He laughs.*) Maybe that's just because I was afraid he'd hurt me. I guess that's it. My grandfather was a coward at dentists.

SALLY. Better hurry if you want your dinner.

BEMIS. All right. (*Crossing to L.*) Ain't you coming in?

SALLY. I had all I wanted.

BEMIS. I guess I don't want any either. I don't think I could eat anything with this tooth.

SALLY. Oh, that's too bad. Does it hurt you very much?

BEMIS. Just a twitch now and then. What is a wisdom tooth supposed to do? Make you wise?

SALLY. I have one and it didn't help me any.

BEMIS. You didn't need any tooth. I don't know anything classical or highly educational. (*Crossing behind sofa*) Doing anything this evening?

SALLY. I've a story to write, but I can do that later.

BEMIS. Would you be inclined to go to a show or anything?

SALLY. No, thanks. I don't think so.

BEMIS. Then maybe you can teach me something.

SALLY. What?



BEMIS. A game you told me you played at college.

SALLY. Did I? What game was that?

BEMIS. (*Smiling*) Cribbage.

SALLY. Oh, yes, so I did. But you must have a board to play with.

BEMIS. I got you one. (*Producing a small package.*)

SALLY. (*Amused*) Oh!—

BEMIS. This afternoon when I came from the dentist's, I passed a toy store and there was a whole window full of them. Those are supposed to be very good for travelling. They fold up.

SALLY. (*Has unwrapped it*) Oh, isn't that a nice one?

BEMIS. Would you mind showing me how? I'm pretty dumb. (*Crosses in front of sofa—sits.*)

SALLY. No more than I am. But this is an easy game.

BEMIS. We'll play after they come out from dinner—huh?

SALLY. (*After pause*) You do a lot of sweet things.

BEMIS. I want to learn how to play it.

SALLY. You knew that I spend so many evenings alone. (*A slight pause.*)

BEMIS. This is that dress you had on Tuesday.

SALLY. Yes. How did you remember that?

BEMIS. Don't you remember you said you wished the hat went with it better?

SALLY. That's right. I did.

BEMIS. Why, you look wonderful in that hat. I looked at the rest of the audience when we were coming out. There wasn't a nicer hat there.

SALLY. But it doesn't go well with this suit. (*Another slight pause.*)

BEMIS. Your eyes are really blue, aren't they?

SALLY. (*A bit amused*) Are they?

BEMIS. I was trying to think what they were, today. I don't think I'd ever noticed.

SALLY. Your eyes are brown.

BEMIS. They're kinda brown. My grandmother used to say they were a kind of a gray-brown.

SALLY. I think they're brown.

BEMIS. Yours are certainly blue, all right. The cards and pins are inside.

SALLY. Isn't it handy?

*(Voices are heard in dining-room.)*

BEMIS. Who all are in there?

SALLY. Mr. Kellogg and Mr. Fry. Mr. Faraday and his wife.

BEMIS. Mr. and Mrs. Faraday get along nice, don't they? I wonder how long they've been married. One of the boys down at the office had his *tin* wedding Wednesday.

SALLY. Really? *(He nods.)*

BEMIS. Most of the fellows down there are married. How come you never got married?

SALLY. There're a good many answers to that, Charlie. When I first came here I was too busy trying to be a success.

BEMIS. Were you ever engaged?

SALLY. No. Were you?

BEMIS. *(Simply)* No. I never had much time either. *(He laughs.)* And I'm no beauty. *(Pause.)* You *could* have got married, I bet.

SALLY. *(Laughing)* Thank you, Charlie, but even so—I'm a bachelor.

BEMIS. A lot of the fellows down at the office *think* I'm engaged. They think that's why I'm saving my money. I had a piece of luck today.

SALLY. Good for you!

BEMIS. I told you I own a little Atlantic Oil——

SALLY. Yes?

BEMIS. They declared a stock dividend.

SALLY. What's that?

BEMIS. They give you one new share with every four. I made about three hundred dollars.

SALLY. Oh, that's wonderful. How long have you been saving, Charlie?

BEMIS. Oh, always. My grandfather started a bank account for me when I was ten years old. I've saved most of this since I came to New York. Counting my securities and savings account and all, I've got about eight thousand seven hundred. A little more. If I'm not careful I'll be renting a bigger box in the vault. *(He smiles at his humor.)*

*(The dining-room door opens. BEMIS breaks off at the sound of voices. KELLOGG and FRY, two middle-aged business men, enter, smoking cigars.)*

FRY. Yes, but half the time the scouts are all wrong.

KELLOGG. Wait a minute. *(He turns to back in the dining-room.)*

*(MRS. POOLE comes on from dining-room. She carries a newspaper.)*

MRS. POOLE. Did you forget this?

KELLOGG. Thank you. I left one already on the El this afternoon.

FRY. He's got the spring heebee-jeebees.

MRS. POOLE. *(Unenlightened)* Yes? Well, it was beautiful today, but it's turned cold tonight. Would you want another blanket, Mr. Kellogg?

KELLOGG. I think it would be mighty comfortable. Don't bother about it now, though. I ain't going to bed early.

MRS. POOLE. It's no trouble. I'll put it there directly. (*Exits left.*)

FRY. (*Sees SALLY and BEMIS*) Hello, there, Charlie!

KELLOGG. (*Advancing toward them*) Hello! What happened to you tonight?

BEMIS. I wasn't hungry.

KELLOGG. The rest of the dinner was very good, Miss Field. Lemon pie.

SALLY. I may beg some from Katie, later. (*SALLY lights a cigarette.*)

FRY. (*To KELLOGG*) Well, what do you say? Shoot a little Kelly?

KELLOGG. All right. (*They start for the hall door.*)

FRY. But no ten cent scratches.

KELLOGG. All right. Then make it a nickel.

FRY. (*He and KELLOGG go off through hall*) Want to walk down or do you think it's too far? (*His voice dies away. The outer door slams.*)

(*MRS. POOLE and KATIE enter from dining-room.*)

MRS. POOLE. You don't need a ladder. They're right on the second shelf. Give him the blue one. It's right on top the others on the second shelf.

KATIE. Yes, ma'am. *There's Mr. Bemis.* (*KATIE exits U.R. and goes upstairs.*)

MRS. POOLE. (*Back of sofa*) I didn't see you two sittin' here. Have you been sittin' here all along?

BEMIS. Yes, ma'am. (*Rises.*)

MRS. POOLE. Well! I was looking for you. Do you feel better?

BEMIS. Yeh, lots better now. (*MRS. POOLE puts her hand affectionately on BEMIS' shoulder.*)

MRS. POOLE. (*To SALLY*) This man's more like a member of the family. You know, when he's been

here six years, we can't afford to have anything happen to him, can we?

(BEMIS laughs, slightly embarrassed.)

MRS. POOLE. (Continuing—to SALLY) How are you feeling?

SALLY. All right, just a little tired.

MRS. POOLE. (After a look at SALLY's cigarette) Do those things rest you?

SALLY. They're a bit of a comfort.

MRS. POOLE. They must be good. So many ladies smoke nowadays. Is that fire all right?

BEMIS. Fine.

SALLY. It's very comfortable.

MRS. POOLE. (Upstage) Want all this light? (Switches off lights. The room is now dark, except the two stand lamps and five fifty Watt globes in foots backing up fireplace.)

BEMIS. We don't need it. (Sits.)

MRS. POOLE. Well, good night. (In doorway) Oh, Mr. Bemis. (BEMIS rises.) The laundry said they was sorry and they'd do those two collars over. So I put them back in the wash.

BEMIS. Thank you very much. Good night. (Sits.)

MRS. POOLE. Good night.

SALLY. Good night. (MRS. POOLE closes the hall door after her. BEMIS touches his cheek.) That's hurting you a lot, isn't it?

BEMIS. (Putting his hand on his left cheek) Oh, not an awful lot.

SALLY. Some toothache gum might help it.

BEMIS. Yeh?

SALLY. You can get some right here at the drug-store.

BEMIS. I guess I will. (Rises.) What do you ask for, just toothache gum?

SALLY. Yes. In a little bottle. (*She indicates the size*) It's a sort of wax.

BEMIS. All right. And you can get the cards ready. (*Exit c. to street.*)

(*The dining-room door is opened by FARRADAY, and as MRS. FARRADAY enters—*)

MRS. FARRADAY. But I've got to get ready, haven't I? (*Crossing r.*)

FARRADAY. Well, don't be all night.

MRS. FARRADAY. Are your coat and hat down here?

FARRADAY. No, they're upstairs. (*Starts toward stairs.*)

MRS. FARRADAY. I'll bring them down.

FARRADAY. Thanks, dear.

MRS. FARRADAY. We're going to the movies. Won't you come with us, Miss Field?

SALLY. No, thanks. I'm a little tired. I think I'll stay in.

FARRADAY. (*To MRS. FARRADAY*) Go on, dear, won't you?

MRS. FARRADAY. I'm going. (*Exits upstairs.*)

FARRADAY. That's the trouble with the first show: if you don't get there early, you have to stand in line for about an hour.

SALLY. Yes?

FARRADAY. What's that, a cribbage board?

SALLY. Mr. Bemis is going to play with me.

FARRADAY. Bemis? Does Bemis play cribbage?

SALLY. No. But it won't take long for me to teach him.

FARRADAY. Then you're a marvel.

SALLY. What do you mean by that?

FARRADAY. Nothing. Only I don't think he's especially bright, do you?

SALLY. I think he's very nice.

FARRADAY. Good Lord!

SALLY. Why, good Lord?

FARRADAY. Miss Field, my wife and I like you. Do you mind if I ask you a question?

SALLY. Certainly not.

FARRADAY. You're not taking Bemis—seriously, are you?

SALLY. Suppose I were?

FARRADAY. I think that would be dreadful. You're an intelligent young woman. Don't you see what he is? No mind of his own—no point of view.

SALLY. But you see I happen to know Charlie isn't at all like that.

FARRADAY. But he has every aspect of the typical New York clerk. He looks like a clerk; he talks and thinks like a clerk; and he's as smug as he can be.

SALLY. You haven't really observed him.

FARRADAY. Oh, yes, I have. I've proved conclusively that he has no convictions about anything. He'll accept your statement that black is white if you give him enough idiotic reasons. (*Moves up.*)

SALLY. How do you think you proved that?

FARRADAY. We happened to leave the house at the same time the other day and walked to the El station together. There has been something silly in the paper about the French Army and Bemis remarked that Frenchmen made better soldiers than Englishmen. Maybe it was the other way around. Anyway, I contradicted him with a few remarks, utterly without logic, and by the time we reached the Elevated he had a directly opposite viewpoint to what he'd had before.

SALLY. Perhaps he was being polite to a man who was talking nonsense. He's a shy person——

FARRADAY. Oh, no. He was really convinced. He said, "Mr. Farraday, you are absolutely right. I had entirely the wrong idea."

SALLY. (*Smiling*) You'll change your mind some day.

(*Enter BEMIS.*)

FARRADAY. Hello, Bemis! We were just talking about you. How's the tooth?

BEMIS. Oh, it's all right now.

SALLY. Did you get it?

BEMIS. Yeh—feels kinda cold—— (*To FARRADAY*) I haven't seen you since we settled the war question. (*To SALLY*) There's a bright man for you. (*To FARRADAY*) You ought to be down helping Coolidge.

FARRADAY. He needs it, doesn't he?

BEMIS. He sure does.

FARRADAY. Just listen to that, Miss Field.

BEMIS. He don't seem to know what it's all about.

FARRADAY. No?

BEMIS. Well, I don't think he's—intelligent!

FARRADAY. (*Entirely for SALLY's benefit*) He came from a little farm just as Lincoln did.

BEMIS. (*Laughing*) Yes. But look who Lincoln was.

FARRADAY. People thought Lincoln was no good at first, you know.

BEMIS. (*Thoughtfully*) Yes, that's true.

FARRADAY. It takes time for a man's real qualities to *come out*.

BEMIS. That's right.

FARRADAY. So when President Coolidge faces a real issue, he may be just as able as Lincoln.

BEMIS. You mean everybody may be giving him very hasty opinion?

FARRADAY. Exactly.

BEMIS. I agree with that. We ought to give him a fair chance.



FARRADAY. Why, just think of how he's kept the cabinet completely under his control.

BEMIS. Yeh!

FARRADAY. It takes a strong man to do that.

BEMIS. That's so—it must.

FARRADAY. I have a whole lot of respect for Mr. Coolidge.

BEMIS. I guess I have too, when you come right down to it.

FARRADAY. I don't know another man I'd trust with a job like that.

BEMIS. You don't, eh?

FARRADAY. No, I don't—do you?

BEMIS. (*After consideration*) No, I don't.

FARRADAY. (*Laughs*) That's the point I had in mind—

BEMIS. I see what you mean— By Golly, I believe you are absolutely right. I guess I had entirely the wrong idea.

(SALLY, *in disgust, rises and goes to window.* MRS. FARRADAY *enters c.* She has FARRADAY'S hat and coat.)

MRS. FARRADAY. Ready?

FARRADAY. Yes, I'm ready.

MRS. FARRADAY. Good evening, Mr. Bemis.

BEMIS. Good evening.

MRS. FARRADAY. (*To SALLY*) Sure you won't come with us?

SALLY. I don't think so.

FARRADAY. I don't blame you much. I don't imagine it's a very good picture.

BEMIS. Where are you going?

MRS. FARRADAY. To the Rivoli.

BEMIS. I hear they've got a great picture this week.

FARRADAY. Really? Where did you hear that?  
(*Comes down.*)

BEMIS. Mrs. Poole.

FARRADAY. Do you consider her a good critic?

BEMIS. Sure; she sees them all.

FARRADAY. But seeing them all doesn't necessarily make a good critic.

BEMIS. Oh, I don't suppose she knows much about the art side of them.

FARRADAY. Or any other side of them, if it comes to that.

BEMIS. Oh, sure, if you come right down to it.

MRS. FARADAY. Oh, come along, dear.

FARRADAY. (*Laughs*) Good night, Miss Field.

(*The FARRADAYS exit.*)

BEMIS. Good night. He's a great fellow.

SALLY. (*Almost crying*) Oh, Charlie!

BEMIS. What's the matter?

SALLY. Didn't you see what he was doing to you?  
(*Cross to sofa.*)

BEMIS. Farraday?

SALLY. Of course.

BEMIS. Just now? You mean that argument. He was right, wasn't he?

SALLY. Yes, he was right, if you want him to be. He was quite right about Coolidge, and he was right about the French and English soldiers the other day when you let him change your opinion in about a minute with a lot of silly talk.

BEMIS. I didn't think it was silly. He showed me where I was wrong.

SALLY. But he didn't. (*Pauses*) Shall we play— (*Sits R. of sofa. BEMIS L.*) Now, I deal twelve cards.

BEMIS. (*Stops her dealing*) What's the matter, Sally? Have I hurt your feelings in some way?

SALLY. It isn't that. It really isn't a question of

whether he was right or wrong, or how much more Farraday knows than you. He just says, "Think my way, because I'm New York, and don't you dare have your own ideas."

BEMIS. I'm not getting what you mean at all, Sally.

SALLY. (*Pause. Puts down cards*) Listen, Charlie, other people don't see you the way I do. And I'm frightened for fear that you're really going to be the man they think you are.

BEMIS. You mean, I'm just one person to you and somebody else to—

SALLY. Yes, you are. Other people see you with—

BEMIS. What?

SALLY. With second-hand ideas about everything. And you needn't have second-hand ideas, no matter whether they're about the kind of hat you wear or the kind of God you pray to. You see, I've been seeing a lovely person inside you for months, and never realized till tonight that he was fighting for his life.

BEMIS. Fighting for his life?

SALLY. Charlie, I'm going to tell you something. I didn't intend to let you know, but I want you to know now. I care a lot about you.

BEMIS. Sally!

SALLY. But I don't care for the Charlie Bemis that Mr. Farraday and the others know. Why, when I heard him talk to you, I was ashamed of you.

BEMIS. (*Pause*) You mean, you think I'm a fool?

SALLY. I mean, I learned to care for something that I'd looked for and hadn't found in the seven years I'd been in New York. I'd learned to care for a gentle, simple boy, who worked as a clerk because he hadn't been ambitious to be known as a *great man*, but was really great because he wasn't pretend-

ing to be anything but what he was. If they'd said you were dull, I'd have said, "All right. He isn't trying to be clever. He isn't all covered with a lot of pretense. You can see him. You can see him standing there. A man who is too honest to swindle you with a lot of tricks. He's wiser than all of you put together, because he hasn't allowed anything to change him from what God made him. He's real. I love that man."

BEMIS. But Sally, I'm not pretending to be anything but what I am.

SALLY. Charlie, what do you think you are?

BEMIS. I'm a clerk! I'm not bright, but I'm not a fool either. I couldn't become a senior clerk and save nine thousand dollars if I was a fool, could I? And I can think quick when I have to, and I can prove it to you. If I hadn't thought quick in the office this afternoon, I'd have been out of a job to-night. Do you know what happened?

SALLY. No.

BEMIS. They fired a stenographer the other day. I didn't know much about her, but it seems like she was getting a raw deal. I was talking it over with some of the fellows at the office. We all agreed it was wrong, and I told them I had a good mind to go to the boss and tell him so, and just at that minute the boss happened to come in. And as quick as that, I pulled myself together. I saw if I wanted to keep on working and be a success, I wouldn't dare butt in on something that wasn't any of my business. And I didn't. That was quick thinking, wasn't it? *That* wasn't going right ahead and making myself ridiculous and everything else besides.

SALLY. If that's what you call success, then I wish you were a failure.

BEMIS. But Sally, what else could I do?

SALLY. (*Rising*) Face the boss and say, "What made you fire that stenographer?" if the only alter-

native was saying, "No, I don't dare ask him, because I'll lose my job."

BEMIS. You would? Why?

SALLY. Because that's being a man! And no matter what you say, Charlie, you know in your heart you're not a man right now. And you could have nine *hundred* thousand dollars; you could be the president of the company yourself and you'd be nothing more than you are right now. (*Goes to c.*)

BEMIS. What's that?

SALLY. A carbon copy of everybody else! (*Exits into hall, closing door.*)

BEMIS. If that's the kind of thing I am, I wouldn't want you to marry me. (*Pause.*) People always have respected me. Nobody ever told me before they didn't. When my Grandpa and Grandma were living, they respected me. They thought I was going to be President some day. If they were alive they could show her I ain't just a carbon copy. What makes her *think* I'm a carbon copy? I'm just what I was when I first met her, and I haven't changed then from what I used to be. New York ain't done nothing to me. I keep whatever nice ideas I had. My Grandma could tell her that. (*From the hall comes a voice.*)

GRANDMA'S VOICE. Skeeter!

BEMIS. I wish to God I knew what to do.

GRANDMA'S VOICE. Skeeter! Where are you, Skeeter?

BEMIS. Who's that?

GRANDMA. Whereabouts are you, Skeeter?

BEMIS. (*Looking into the fireplace*) Grandma! I'm right here, Grandma. I'm right here. Trying to find out what I'm doing that's wrong.

(*Music is heard.*)

GRANDMA'S VOICE. You a good boy, Skeeter?

BEMIS. Yes, Ma'am.

*(The hall doors automatically open. There is a flood of blue light in its neighborhood. GRANDMA and GRANDPA appear in the doorway. They are an elderly couple in the clothes of twenty years ago. They slowly enter the room. BEMIS is looking into the fireplace.)*

BEMIS. Hello, Grandma. Hello, Grandpa! Gee! I certainly need your help. *(They stand just inside the doorway, smiling at him.)*

CURTAIN

## ACT II

*The Curtain rises on the same picture as at the end of Act I.*

GRANDPA. Here we are, Skeeter.

BEMIS. Hello, Grandpa! Hello, Grandma! Gee, I certainly need your help.

GRANDMA. We're here, son.

BEMIS. Gee, I can almost see you.

GRANDMA. You can see us.

BEMIS. She'd be a little smaller than Grandpa.  
(Rises.)

GRANDMA. You can see us. (BEMIS goes to the left of sofa—turns and sees them for the first time.)

GRANDMA. It's all right for us to come, ain't it?

BEMIS. Yeh, of course it is. But—but you're both dead and all like that. You've been dead for so many years. You both died before old Mrs. Rogers died, didn't you?

GRANDPA. Let me see. No, Grandma died first. Then old Mrs. Rogers died. Then I died the following spring. That's it, ain't it, Grandma?

GRANDMA. I forget. Anyway, what's the difference? Here we are, Grandpa and me and the little thing that showed us how to get here. (The room is slowly becoming brighter.)

(LALITA looks over GRANDPA'S shoulder. LALITA is a little boy's "lady from a far countree." She goes toward BEMIS.)

BEMIS. I remember you.

LALITA. You remembered me this afternoon, when you began to read that book.

BEMIS. (*To LALITA*) Where did you find them?

LALITA. They were on a road I passed. They were wandering, poor darlings.

GRANDMA. We were looking for our little grandson.

BEMIS. (*To GRANDMA and GRANDPA*) She's an old friend of mine.

GRANDMA. Perhaps she's one I used to tell you about.

BEMIS. Yeh!

GRANDMA. May we come in?

BEMIS. Oh, yes. Come in.

(*GRANDMA comes down and sits in chair right. GRANDPA assists her.*)

GRANDPA. (*As he comes down he takes off his spectacles and wipes them*) Anything you want us to do, we'll do, Skeeter.

BEMIS. Oh, there's a lot. Are you really here to help me? (*Going to them.*)

GRANDPA. If you need help. That's all we'd ever come back for.

BEMIS. Oh, I do need it. I need all you can give me. I need you to show people something. Tell me first of all, ain't I just the way I always was?

GRANDMA. Why, of course you are. Let's see your hands. (*He performs an old ceremony, by showing the backs of his hands and then turning them, palms up.*)

BEMIS. (*Smiling*) They're clean. (*GRANDMA nods approval.*)

GRANDPA. I think you're just what you always were. You was about the finest boy I ever saw in my life.



GRANDMA. You were the best boy anyone ever saw.

LALITA. You were the nicest mortal I'd ever want to see.

BEMIS. That's what I want you to tell her.

GRANDPA. Tell who, Skeeter?

BEMIS. Sally.

GRANDMA. Who's Sally?

BEMIS. She's my girl. She thinks I'm a fool. She thinks New York's changed me into another fellow.

GRANDPA. (*Incredulous and amused*) She thinks our Skeeter's a fool? Why, she must be crazy.

BEMIS. No, she ain't crazy, Grandpa. She's really wonderful.

GRANDMA. If she's your girl, of course she is. But she can't have any crazy notions like that. We'll talk to her. We'll cure her of *that* idea. (*It is still growing lighter. During the rest of the scene the room takes on the color of afternoon.*)

GRANDPA. (*Puts on glasses. Crosses left*) Now, you just tell her we're here.

BEMIS. (*Going up and calling*) All right. Sally!

GRANDMA. The idea of people thinking anything could change him. Why, he's perfect.

BEMIS. (*Calls*) Sally!

(*The hall doors automatically open.*)

SALLY. (*Enters, the doors close gently behind her*) Yes, Charley. (*SALLY is surprised, but not puzzled.*)

BEMIS. Sally, this is my Grandma.

SALLY. How do you do? (*Shakes hands.*)

BEMIS. And my Grandpa.

SALLY. (*Crossing to GRANDPA*) How do you do?

GRANDMA. She don't *look* crazy.

GRANDPA. You look like a pretty nice girl.

BEMIS. Oh, she is.

LALITA. Hello, Sally.

BEMIS. (*Referring to LALITA*) She's an old idea of mine.

SALLY. Oh, you're a lovely idea.

GRANDMA. I tell you he has the nicest ideas of anyone you ever see.

BEMIS. I'm trying to think of your name.

LALITA. What's a name?

BEMIS. A name is a tag they put on each one of us, so they can tell us apart.

GRANDMA. I don't think she's got one, have you?

LALITA. (*Shakes her head*) No.

BEMIS. Oh, you've got to have a name, and it ought to be beautiful.

GRANDPA. We'll get you one.

GRANDMA. He'll think up a fine one.

BEMIS. I'm trying to make one up. Lalita! Would Lalita be all right?

LALITA. That would be lovely.

GRANDMA. (*To SALLY*) I knew he'd think up a good one for her.

GRANDPA. "Lalita." That's a crackerjack. (*To SALLY*) How's that for you?

SALLY. Yes, it's a perfect name.

GRANDMA. I tell you!

BEMIS. (*To LALITA*) Gosh! You know, I sort of felt you'd bring them. When did you feel the click?

LALITA. When you picked up that book at the dentist's and began to read it. Oh, that was a wonderful click.

SALLY. What's a click?

GRANDMA. It's something Charley has with her.

GRANDPA. (*To SALLY*) Something private, I think. He don't tell everybody his business. (*Sits on piano stool.*)

BEMIS. No, it isn't private. It's just kind of mysterious. Ain't it, Lalita?

LALITA. Yes, may I tell Sally?

BEMIS. Sure.

LALITA. (*To SALLY*) A click is—when a mortal and one of us think of each other at the same time. I mean when they both sort of see each other at the same time. You see, where I came from, they try to tell us there are no such things as mortals. Often they'd say, "Oh, stop believing in mortals and all that sort of nonsense. Mortals, indeed!" But I kept on believing. I guess I was the only one there who was believing. You see, when I was very small, I saw a mortal once. I played with a kite he was flying. (*To BEMIS*) Then, today, just for an instant you thought of me. That was the click.

GRANDMA. You knew her when you were little, I guess.

BEMIS. Yes. I remember the kite. That's how you were dressed, all right.

LALITA. (*Amused*) You never noticed my dress then.

MRS. POOLE. (*Off stage*) Katie! Katie!

KATIE. (*Off stage*) All right, Mrs. Poole, I'm coming.

BEMIS. It's different from what people wear now.

LALITA. It's the only one I have, I guess.

BEMIS. That's all right. While you're here we can fix you up with something else. Can't we, Sally?

SALLY. That dress is lovely.

BEMIS. Yes, but you—we don't want people staring at ther. I'll fix her up fine later. Haven't you got anything she could wear for now?

SALLY. (*A trifle reluctantly*) Yes, of course I have. (*Starts to go.*)

BEMIS. No, don't you go. I want you to stay and listen to them. I know who can fix her up. Katie. (*To GRANDMA and GRANDPA*) Katie'll like her.

GRANDMA. Everyone'll like her when they see you do.

SALLY. Katie would.

*(Doors automatically open.)*

BEMIS. *(Calling)* Katie! *(KATIE enters. He points to LALITA)* See her, Katie?

KATIE. *(Smiling)* Sure, I do.

BEMIS. Ever see anyone like her?

KATIE. Indeed I have. I don't just remember where.

SALLY. We want her to try on some of my things, Katie. Would you help her?

KATIE. Sure. Come along, darling.

*(LALITA is encouraged by BEMIS's nods.)*

LALITA. *(At door)* We have this where I come from.

KATIE. What?

LALITA. Going up and down stairs. *(Exits with*

KATIE. *Doors close automatically.)*

BEMIS. Well, gee, this is great! *(Takes GRANDMA's wraps)* How long do you suppose you can stay?

GRANDMA. We'll stay till we get that certain matter all fixed up.

GRANDPA. Don't you worry about us in the meantime. I guess a busy man like you won't have much time for entertaining.

BEMIS. *(Placing wraps upstage)* Oh, I ain't so busy. I want you to be with me all the time.

GRANDMA. *(To SALLY)* That's just like him. I never see such a boy for being nice to his Grandma and Grandpa.

BEMIS. *(Going to GRANDPA)* How's your rheumatism, Grandpa?

GRANDPA. What?

BEMIS. Do you feel any rheumatics now?

GRANDPA. (*Rises*) No. (*Feeling legs*) That's funny, ain't it? (*Starts to limber up.*)

BEMIS. That's fine.

GRANDPA. It certainly is. I'd forgotten all about it. (*Laughs*) That's what killed me, you know. (*Sits on stool.*)

GRANDMA. (*To SALLY*) Imagine him remembering that.

SALLY. Yes.

GRANDMA. Ordinary people wouldn't remember a thing like that.

SALLY. No.

GRANDPA. (*Crosses to SALLY*) That shows he's got a wonderful mind. He don't think just the way ordinary people think. He thinks clear, too. Don't you, Skeeter? (*To GRANDMA*) Remember when I said he was the clearest thinking boy in the world? (*Crosses in front of sofa.*)

GRANDMA. Oh, no, it was me said that. I said that, the day Mr. Warner's mule fell in that hole and Charley filled the hole by shoveling in dirt until the mule walked right out. (*SALLY looks at BEMIS.*) I saw that about him early. (*SALLY goes back to sofa—to right.*)

GRANDPA. No, it was long before that. I said he was clear-thinking and brave as could be one day. One day special. Don't you remember when I said that, Grandma?

GRANDMA. I believe you did. You said that the day you took the horse out of the stable when them tramps set fire to it. You ever tell her about that time, Charley?

SALLY. No, he never did. (*Comes down to end of sofa—right.*)

GRANDMA. Well, it was one of the finest things I ever saw done by anybody. Of course he wouldn't

tell you about it. He didn't go around blowing about things.

GRANDPA. Lemme tell it. (*Sits on sofa, left; beckons to SALLY to sit beside him. GRANDMA subsides.*) You see, we had a pretty big place in Indiana, right on the edge of the town. Well, one day a couple of tramps came along and knocked at the back door. We didn't have a dog then, I guess, and——

BEMIS. Sure, we had Don, Grandpa. Don't you remember I took him to town to have Dr. Muller treat him, and that was why I wasn't there to see them when they did it? (*To SALLY*) He was a wonderful dog!

GRANDPA. (*Vaguely recalling*) Oh, yes, I recollect that, now that——

GRANDMA. I wish you could have seen that pair. They was just the kind that *would* set fire to a stable.

GRANDPA. Lemme tell it. Well, sir, Mrs. B. was all alone at the time. I was down at our store.

GRANDMA. You and Mr. McIntee had gone fishing.

GRANDPA. Had we?

BEMIS. That's right, Grandpa. Because don't you remember they tried to get you down at the store and you weren't there?

GRANDPA. Yes, I guess you're right, Grandma. Just the same, as I was saying, these two fellows show up at the back door and ask Mrs. B. for some dinner. And——

GRANDMA. No. They did no such thing.

GRANDPA. Didn't they?

GRANDMA. No, sir.

(*GRANDPA surrenders. GRANDMA rises and goes to right of SALLY on sofa; sits.*)

GRANDMA. (*Continuing*) It was around eleven

o'clock in the forenoon and I was out in the kitchen getting some things for dinner for Charley and me. He'd gone in to Dr. Muller's with Don and I knew he'd be back around noon time. So I was cooking a steak or something when I looked up, and lo and behold, here's these two men! (*Correcting GRANDPA*) And they didn't ask for anything to eat at all. As a matter of actual fact, the big one said, "Have you got any old clothes, lady?" I said no, I didn't think so. Then the little one asked if the lady of the house was in. I said I was the lady of the house and I was sorry, but I had no clothes to give them. We'd been packing missionary barrels down at the church that week and there really *wasn't* a thing I could give them. So then *one* of them—I don't recollect whether it was the big one or the little one,—my, they were a bad looking pair—whichever it was, said a certain oath and started away. I didn't pay any more attention to them; we'd had tramps coming and going all summer long. So I went back to cooking the steak or whatever it was. I believe it *was* a steak. Well, Charley, here, hadn't come home yet, and I was going on ahead in the kitchen, when our front door rang. So I said to myself, "Well, this is a funny time for the mailman or anything like that!" But I went to the door and it wasn't any mailman! It was Miss Curtis, that was a neighbor of ours that lived across the street. She was very excited, and I said, "Why, Miss Curtis, why, what's the trouble?" And she said, "Why, Mrs. Bemis, your stable's on fire."

GRANDPA. Them two tramps had set fire to it!

GRANDMA. Yes, siree, they had.

BEMIS. It had only been put up the year before.

GRANDMA. Well, when Miss Curtis told me that, I said, "Merciful heavens! Our horse Captain's in there, and little Charley's got the key." Charley used to keep his little tool chest and things in there,

and when he went to the store or anywhere when Grandpa wasn't around, why, he'd lock it. Well, Miss Curtis told me not to be hysterical and we'd go out and look. So I ran out the front door with her—you couldn't see it from the back of the house: it was over at the side of the lot—and there it was, all on fire. Well, I said, "Poor Captain," 'cause I knew Miss Curtis and I couldn't break the door in, and there wasn't a man anywhere round.

GRANDPA. It was all in about ten minutes.

GRANDMA. I tell you I felt pretty sick. I thought I was going to collapse sure. Miss Curtis said, "Oh, Mrs. Bemis, what can we do?" And I said, "Murder!" For it didn't seem there was anything we *could* do. Then suddenly down the road comes Charley, without his cap on. If ever a boy ran fast! He was only about twelve years old. I says, "Oh, you be careful! Don't get near where it's burning." He says, "That's all right, Grandma!" And do you know what he did? He went right up to the door that was on fire, mind you; the lock was hot, even, and took out his key and unlocked that door! Blistered his hands, didn't it?

BEMIS. A little.

GRANDMA. He opened that door and led Captain out just as cool as you please! And we collected full insurance on that stable!

SALLY. (*Rises, goes to BEMIS, left*) Oh, you were wonderful! (*Turning to GRANDMA*) I'm so glad you told me.

GRANDMA. Surprised you, didn't it?

SALLY. No, not really. I always knew you were fine and brave.

BEMIS. But Sally, I thought you said that you were ashamed of me? (*GRANDMA and GRANDPA laugh.*)

GRANDMA. Ashamed?

SALLY. I did? How could I have said that?



BEMIS. Didn't you? It's all right, then.

SALLY. Oh, wait—I'd forgotten. It was Mr. Farraday. It was what *he* said about you.

BEMIS. Ah, that's what I thought. I thought it was Farraday that gave you that idea, Sally.

GRANDMA. Farraday? Who's he?

SALLY. Well, he's like everybody in New York. You see, New York doesn't know the Charley that you know.

GRANDMA. Don't you know him? Why, they *must* know him.

SALLY. I mean they don't understand him. Oh, I wish you'd tell *them* just as you told me.

GRANDMA. Why, certainly we will.

SALLY. (*Calling*) Mr. Farraday!

(FARRADAY *enters. Doors open automatically.*

GRANDMA *goes R., GRANDPA L. Music.*)

FARRADAY. Did you call me, Miss Field?

SALLY. Yes, I called you because I want you to know how wrong you were about Charley Bemis.

FARRADAY. I wasn't wrong. (*The door closes.*)

SALLY. I'm going to prove that you were wrong.

GRANDMA. Of course, you was wrong.

FARRADAY. I beg your pardon. I didn't know there was anyone here.

BEMIS. Mr. Farraday, this is my grandmother—my grandfather.

FARRADAY. Glad to meet you both. (*Comes in front of sofa.*)

SALLY. They have been telling me of the real Charley Bemis, and I wanted you to hear it.

GRANDMA. (*Ready to tell the story again*) It's all about a certain fire that happened when Charley was twelve years old.

FARRADAY. I don't care what he was when he was twelve—it's what he is now.

GRANDPA. All right—we'll talk about that. You've got nerve to criticise a man who holds the position Skeeter does! (GRANDMA crosses to FARRADAY. FARRADAY and SALLY look puzzled.) It ain't patriotic.

FARRADAY. What position?

BEMIS. Wait, Grandpa. I know what you're thinking, but we won't talk about that now—please—

FARRADAY. (To GRANDMA) I don't know what he means.

GRANDMA. He means you have no right to go around slandering our grandson, the President of the United States. (FARRADAY laughs.) What are you laughing at?

BEMIS. Grandma, I ain't the President.

GRANDPA. (Great surprise) You ain't?

GRANDMA. Then what are you doing here in the White House?

BEMIS. (Voice wavering) This ain't the White House.

GRANDMA. Ain't this the famous Blue Room?

BEMIS. No, ma'am!

GRANDMA. (Turning a slow circle) No. Now I see that it ain't—it's a kind of sitting-room.

FARRADAY. Bemis, the President! (Sits on sofa.)

GRANDMA. Well, if he ain't, it's only because he didn't try for it.

GRANDPA. Of course not. What career did you pick out, Skeeter?

FARRADAY. (Scornfully) Why, he's a clerk.

GRANDPA. (Proudly) A clerk, eh? Oh! The business world!

GRANDMA. (Delightedly, to SALLY) He followed his great-grandfather!

GRANDPA. Well, good for you, Skeeter!

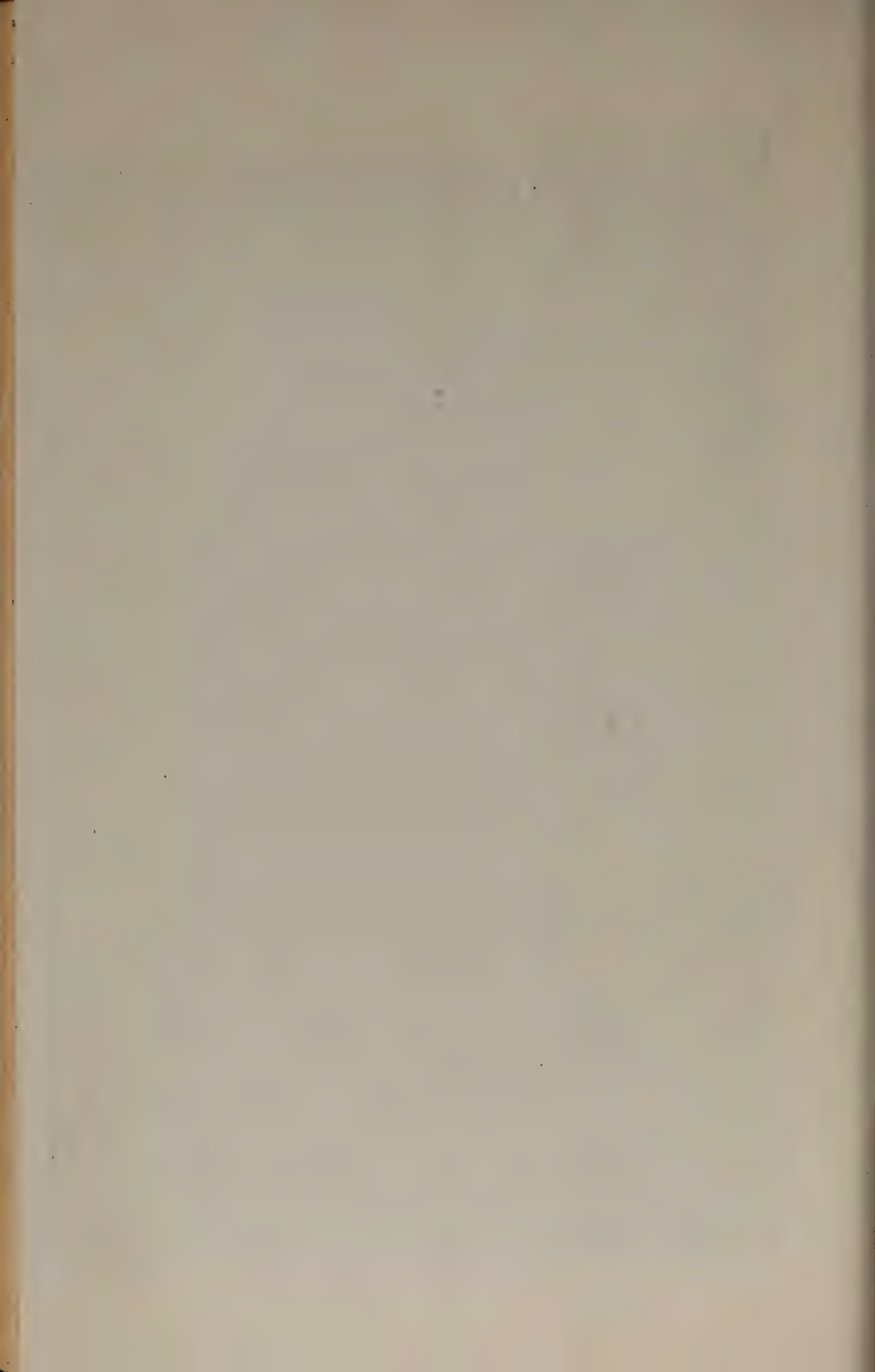
GRANDMA. What kind of a clerk are you, son?

BEMIS. (Going to GRANDMA) A senior clerk.



"THE WISDOM TOOTH"

APOLLO



That means I'm higher than the other clerks—I get the biggest salary—and the biggest bonus.

GRANDPA. Why, of course, you would. (*Going to FARRADAY—to FARRADAY*) What do you think of that for a boy who didn't start goin' to school till he was eight years old!

FARRADAY. I think just what I've always thought. He doesn't dare call his soul his own.

BEMIS. (*Passionately*) Yes, I do!

GRANDMA. If I was you, I'd apologize to him for saying that.

FARRADAY. (*Smiles*) I'll be glad to if he can change my opinion.

GRANDPA. There, Skeeter—there's your chance. Now just listen, everybody.

FARRADAY. (*After a pause*) Well, I'm waiting, Bemis.

(*Music. BEMIS' mouth opens, but he does not speak.*)

GRANDPA. Go after him, Skeeter.

FARRADAY. (*Looking at BEMIS—pause*) He can't. (*Rises.*) Because he has nothing to say. (*Goes to BEMIS*) He has no mind of his own.

SALLY. Tell him it isn't so. Tell him he lies.

FARRADAY. You have no mind, have you, Bemis? And you're afraid of New York. That's why you had to bring these old people to help you, isn't it?

BEMIS. That isn't so, is it, Grandma and Grandpa? (*To FARRADAY*) And you can't prove I ain't independent.

FARRADAY. (*To GRANDPA*) No? (*He smiles; then closes his eyes.*)

(*MRS. POOLE enters from up stage.*)

BEMIS. No.

MRS. POOLE. Mr. Bemis! (*Pause.*) Mr. Bemis, I want to know who these people are that you've got here. (*She stands back of sofa.*)

BEMIS. What's the matter with them?

MRS. POOLE. I want to know who they are.

BEMIS. They're my grandparents.

MRS. POOLE. I thought I knew the old people; you've told me about them. They're dead, ain't they?

BEMIS. Yes, ma'am.

MRS. POOLE. Well, I don't seem to mind that so much. It's unusual, but I don't mind it. But there's something I *do* mind.

BEMIS. What?

MRS. POOLE. Something else you've brought in here. You're trying to hide something, Mr. Bemis.

BEMIS. No, I'm not.

MRS. POOLE. Oh, ain't you? Katie, bring that in here.

(KATIE enters with LALITA. LALITA is frightened.)

LALITA. (*Indicating a light coat she is wearing*) I can't wear this. Tell her who I am.

MRS. POOLE. That coat can't fool me. I know who you are. (*Tears coat off LALITA. LALITA crosses L. of BEMIS.*)

BEMIS. (*To MRS. POOLE*) Oh, you don't want to mind her.

MRS. POOLE. But I do mind her. You know I mind her.

BEMIS. She's only an old idea I had. (*FARRADAY laughs.*)

MRS. POOLE. An idea you had?

BEMIS. (*To MRS. POOLE*) I guess that idea's a little old-fashioned. (*Music.*)

MRS. POOLE. (*Pleasantly*) Yes, and you know it is. You know very well an idea like that don't fit in with our scheme of things. (*Persuasively*) You're

what I call the ideal boarder, and I'm going to see you stay one. I've liked you better than any boarder I ever had. Now, you wouldn't want to have people laughing and sneering at you, would you? I just want you to promise me you won't have any ideas like that any more. You *won't* think of her again, will you?

BEMIS. No, I guess you're right. I won't think of her again. (*LALITA goes to GRANDMA.*)

SALLY. (*Going up c.*) Charley!

(*FARRADAY laughs and his laughter is augmented by the laughter heard in the dentist's office.*)

MRS. POOLE. I'm sorry, but I've got to ask you to go. (*Crossing to Fairy.*)

GRANDPA. (*Loudly, his back to BEMIS*) Skeeter! Skeeter!

GRANDMA. I thought he was around here somewhere. I feel kind of queer, Grandpa.

GRANDPA. So do I. I don't seem to know where we are.

MRS. POOLE. You're right here in my house and you've got to leave it.

(*GRANDPA gets hat and umbrella. GRANDPA crossing to MRS. POOLE.*)

GRANDPA. Oh, yes, I know. I'm sorry we intruded. You see, my wife and I got lost. We were looking for a grandson of ours.

(*MRS. POOLE exits into hall. Doors close after her.*)

BEMIS. I'm Charley, Grandpa. I'm Skeeter.

GRANDPA. (*Placidly*) No. I'm afraid there's some mistake. The one we're looking for is someone else. He's really a little boy. (*Going to FARRA-*

DAY) Maybe you've seen him. He's a scrappin' little fellow. He's studying to be a big man. He's going to be President of the United States some day.

GRANDMA. That don't interest *them* none.

LALITA. Oh, do let us go.

GRANDPA. Thank you for trying to oblige us, Mister. But I guess we got into the wrong place. Ready, Grandma? (*Hall doors open—and blue light is flooding hallway.*)

GRANDMA. Yes, I'm ready.

BEMIS. Grandpa! (*Blue light in hall.*)

GRANDPA. I was certain sure you wasn't him, when you didn't talk up to that man there.

GRANDMA. You see, our little boy wouldn't have done that. (*GRANDPA and GRANDMA go into the hall.*)

LALITA. Good-bye, Sally.

SALLY. Good-bye, poor little idea. (*LALITA exits.*)

FARRADAY. You see, I was right, Miss Field. (*Looks at BEMIS*) I don't know of a better man for President. (*Laughs; exits.*)

BEMIS. (*Collapsing into chair down R. Start to dim lights. Music*) And I came from a little farm. I came to the city, and my people came to help me, but they couldn't. They didn't even know me. Or they couldn't stand for what I'd become. They left me. And now I'm all alone.

SALLY. You're not alone, my dear. (*The room is becoming dark, save for the light on BEMIS.*)

BEMIS. Yes, I am. And why are you here?

SALLY. Because you know I love you.

BEMIS. But Sally, I'm nothing at all. That's why they left me.

SALLY. (*Kneeling beside him*) No, Charley, you left them. They wanted to help the little boy they knew long ago. If you could find him, he'd take you to the man I love.

BEMIS. Do you think I could find him?



SALLY. . Only *you* can find him.

BEMIS. (*Rising*) But where is he?

SALLY. He's somewhere on the road they're travelling. Tell me you will find him, Charley. Tell me that.

BEMIS. I've *got* to find him. (*He stands at the open door.*)

SALLY. And when you find him, bring him back to me.

BEMIS. (*As he exits*) Grandpa! Grandma!  
(*The lights go out.*)

END OF SCENE I

## SCENE II

*A Black Drop is lowered in one; in a faint light  
BEMIS's face is seen.*

BEMIS. Grandma! Grandpa! Here I am. Where are you, Grandpa? Look! I am the way I always was. I haven't changed at all.

CHILD'S VOICE. Hey, Skeeter! We're going over to Pinky's. Bring your magic lantern.

BEMIS. Remember me licking Red McIlroy when he threw the rock at Mr. Gelsinger?

VOICE OF MAN. Where has that boy gone?

VOICE OF WOMAN. I sent him to the grocery store. He'll be right back.

VOICE OF MAN. We'll have him take that truck out of the attic.

BEMIS. Look! I'm that way now. Look! I don't want to do anything wrong. I only want to do what I think I ought to do. I want to be fair and square and not do anything I don't think is right. You remember I always did that. Show me anything is wrong and I'll fix it. I'll do anything for her. Remember how I used to play I was a knight going out on an adventure? That's what I want to do now. (*Frantically*) Where *are* you, people?

BOY'S VOICE. I did not.

SECOND BOY'S VOICE. You did *so!*

FIRST BOY'S VOICE. I did not!

SECOND BOY'S VOICE. You did *so!*

FIRST BOY'S VOICE. I did not!

SECOND BOY'S VOICE. You did *so!*

BEMIS. I was about eleven years old when I had

that scrap with Porky Mason. Remember we had a fight at the circus?

MAN'S VOICE. Good many people goin'.

ANOTHER MAN'S VOICE. Yep. Lot of people on the road, this morning.

BEMIS. Remember when I stopped him when he tried to make fun of me and tell me what I ought to think. Remember the circus, Grandpa?

MAN'S VOICE. What do you want, kid?

SKEETER'S VOICE. Some man told me to bring this bucket of water in here.

MAN. (*Off*) All right. Here's your ticket.

BEMIS. Remember how I waited and waited for it? And you said, "If you're a good boy, I'll take you." And I said, "No, now I'll take you." Remember that, Grandpa? You remember, don't you, Grandpa, how I got up at three o'clock and left a little note and all so you wouldn't be worried? Oh, you *came* to the circus. (*Music.*)

(*The voices of many persons are heard in a jumble of circus cries: "Red lemonade!" "Fresh roasted peanuts!" "Ladies and gent'men! In Ring Number two——" "Ice cream sandwiches, cool and refreshing!" etc.*)

BEMIS. (*Continues speaking through voices*) Don't you remember you came there and you were so proud of me. I can remember that. I can remember you coming in and everything.

(*Black out. Fly drop.*)

END OF SCENE II

### SCENE III

*(The light goes up. BEMIS is standing alone in a circus tent. The music is heard as though it were being played for a performance in an adjoining tent. Entrances down R. and L. Crates, elephant tubs, part of a circus wagon, harness, etc., are seen. L. of C. a pile of blankets.)*

BEMIS. By Golly, if this ain't just about the most wonderful thing in the world. What if I *did* have to get up early?

GRANDPA'S VOICE. Skeeter. *(Entering R.2.)*

BEMIS. Here I am, Grandpa. *(GRANDPA enters.)*

GRANDPA. Your Grandma's worried for fear you got lost.

BEMIS. I've been carrying water and talking with the circus people and everything.

GRANDPA. Did you get in for nothin'?

BEMIS. Sure. They gave me tickets. We're all good friends now.

*(GRANDMA enters R.2.)*

GRANDMA. Skeeter Bemis! I thought you were here. What time did you leave the house?

BEMIS. *(Crosses to her)* Twenty-two minutes past three.

GRANDMA. Murder! You've been goin' around all day without anything in your stomach.

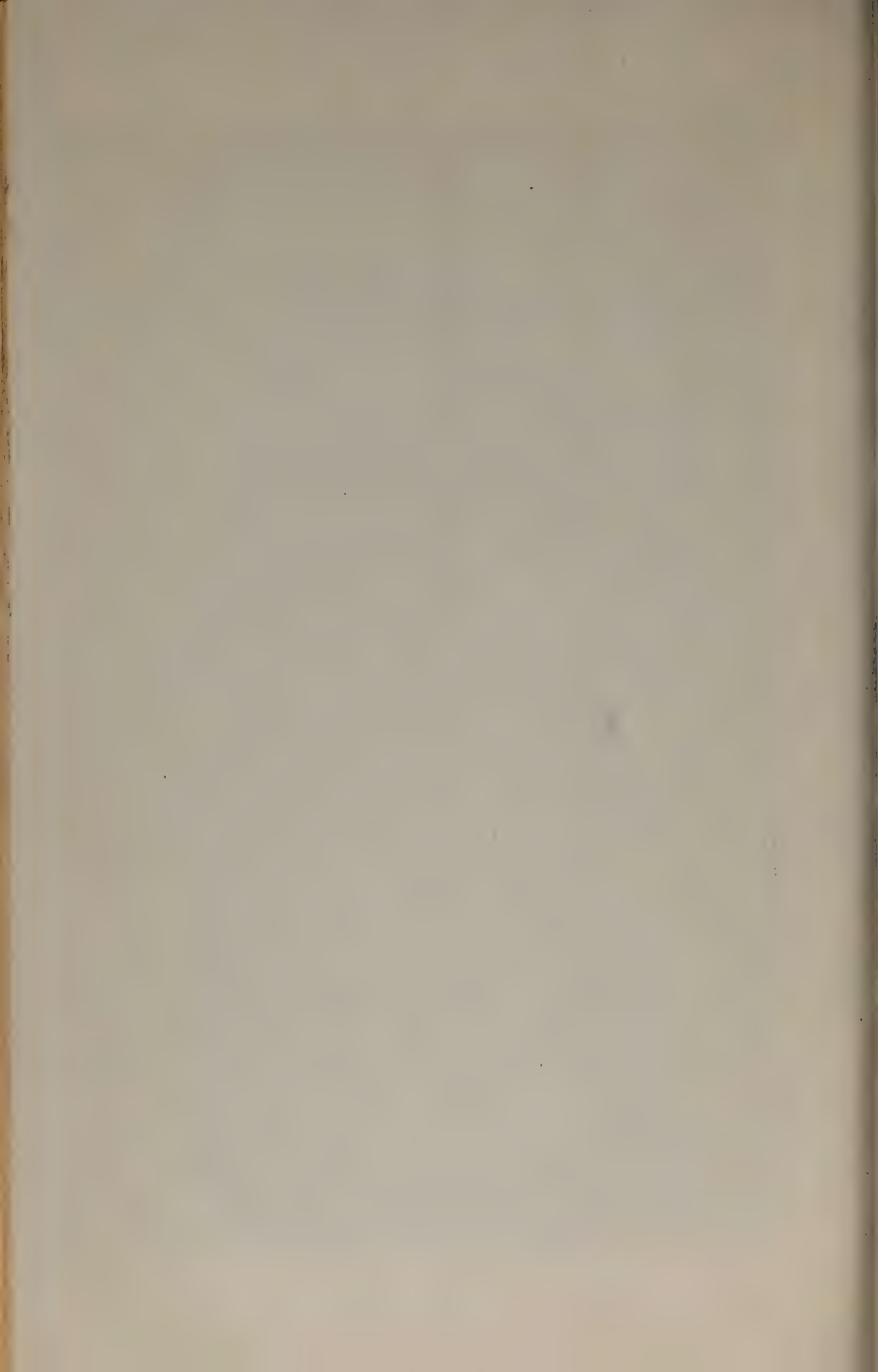
BEMIS. I had some coffee with some of the actors.

GRANDMA. Drinking that truck!

BEMIS. It was fine, Grandma.



" THE WISDOM TOOTH "



GRANDMA. He's made friends with everybody and got tickets for the show.

BEMIS. Sure. Would you like to meet some of them?

GRANDPA. Must be quite an organization.

BEMIS. Oh, they got hundreds of people that just are managers.

GRANDPA. Did you talk to the bosses?

BEMIS. No. But I bet I could have. That would be Barnum and Bailey. I don't remember them very clearly. But they're probably here. (*Looks around for them. Music.*)

(BARNUM and BAILEY enter. They are stout men, elaborately dressed. They have a jovial manner.)

BARNUM and BAILEY. Well, well, well, well, well, well, well.

BEMIS. Well, this certainly is a surprise. Mr. Barnum and Mr. Bailey, I would like to have you meet my grandma and grandpa.

BARNUM and BAILEY. (*Synchronously*) Well, this is a pleasure. Quite a treat, I must say. Certainly glad to meet you. Welcome, welcome!

GRANDPA. I remember seeing you, Mr. Barnum, when I was a little fellow like Skeeter here. Then you died, I believe.

GRANDMA. Why, yes, I thought you were both dead.

BARNUM. (*Amused*) Oh, Lord, no! You don't see anything mortal about us, do you? We've had all the mortality knocked out of us. You know, if a fellow's having a good time, he can stay a mortal just so long, and—

BAILEY. Barnum! Boy!

BARNUM. (*Not moving*) Boy?

BAILEY. Trying to get in.

BARNUM. (*To GRANDMA*). Just a second. (*BARNUM goes back of the tent, lifts the bottom of the tent and allows a small boy to crawl through.*)

PORKY. Which way is it?

BARNUM. (*Pointing to entrance D.R.*) Right through there, sir.

BAILEY. (*Gets paper bag of peanuts from circus wagon and hands it to PORKY*) With our compliments.

BEMIS. Hello, Porky!

PORKY. Hello, Skeeter! Comin' in?

BEMIS. A little later. (*The boy runs off D.R.*)

BARNUM. Yes, indeed. You get fifty or sixty million kids imagining you're a magician and you just see how long a handful of adults can keep you just a dead person. You *can't* be just a *dead* person, can you, Bailey?

BAILEY. Come one, come all.

GRANDMA. Well, we want to thank you for having been so nice to our grandson. It's quite an honor to have him introduce us to people like you.

GRANDPA. They tell me you're a millionaire, Mr. Barnum?

BARNUM. (*With expansive modesty*) Many times over. Could my partner and I escort you and your good wife to the Congress of Animals, personally?

BEMIS. (*Helpfully*) That's the menagerie.

GRANDMA. Why, it would be a rare pleasure. Come on, son.

BEMIS. No, you go ahead. I think I'll stay around here for a while and get acquainted with some more of the men.

(*From down left comes EVERETT ROGERS, the town roustabout. He is slightly drunk, very dirty and most genial. He carries a bucket which he places bottom up down L.*)



BEMIS. Hello, Everett.

GRANDMA. (*Down R.*) Who's that?

BEMIS. Everett Rogers.

BARNUM. (*Down R.*) He's kind of helping out, while we're in your city.

GRANDMA. I heard they arrested you again, Everett.

EVERETT. (*Pleasantly*) Yes, ma'am. I was a little under the weather.

GRANDPA. (*Sadly*) You was drunk, Everett.

GRANDMA. (*To BARNUM as the party move off*) Too bad. He was such a nice little boy. The same as Skeeter is now.

BARNUM. Step lively, there. There's lots of water to be carried yet, you know.

EVERETT. Yes, I know.

BAILEY. The show starts right away. This way, ladies and gentlemen. (*Music. BARNUM, BAILEY, GRANDPA and GRANDMA exit, R.2. The band grows louder.*)

GRANDPA. (*Calling back*) Don't stay too long, Skeeter. Your Grandma will be worried.

BEMIS. No, sir. Did you get up early too, Everett?

EVERETT. Around four o'clock.

BEMIS. I was out of the house by half-past three.

(*A Clown comes on from where GRANDMA and the others went out.*)

CLOWN. Hurry up, Fish. (*A second clown enters. BEMIS and EVERETT watch the two clowns.*) I'm gonna put on my other suit.

SECOND CLOWN. I guess I'll change mine, too. (*They are crossing toward the left entrance*) Hello, fellows.

BEMIS. (*A little awed*) Hello, how's it going?

FIRST CLOWN. Fine.

SECOND CLOWN. The big bosses are here.

BEMIS. Yeh, I brought them.

FIRST CLOWN. See you later. (*Two Clowns exit, left.*)

BEMIS. That first one's really red-headed. I saw him getting dressed.

EVERETT. The other one's got an eighty-five dollar donkey.

BEMIS. Yeh. I saw it. What did they arrest you for, Everett? *Were* you drunk?

EVERETT. (*Sitting on bucket*) No. I resigned my job at the stable yesterday and three or four of us went on a little picnic. Old man Mercer claimed we were trespassing. I don't know how them stories of drunkenness get started.

BEMIS. I saw you drunk once.

EVERETT. Yes, I believe I was once. But not yesterday. Yesterday I was making plans for the summer.

BEMIS. (*Admiringly*) Are you goin' away again?

EVERETT. Well, I just don't know yet what I'll do. These people here want me to go with them. I don't know whether I'd enjoy circus life or not.

BEMIS. It must be wonderful.

EVERETT. Oh, it's pleasant. I've got a close friend with the circus, you know. He's an animal trainer. (*Rises. Calls out*) Hey, Professor. (*An animal trainer appears D.L. He is dressed for the ring, but wears a derby hat on the back of his head and carries a whip. He stands facing BEMIS, back to audience.*) Professor, would you oblige me by showing this little boy your chest where it was clawed?

(THE ANIMAL TRAINER bears his chest to BEMIS.)

BEMIS. Gee, that's fine! Tigers?

ANIMAL TRAINER. (*Casually as he crosses L.*)  
Panthers and reptiles. (*Exits L.*)

BEMIS. I hear they all get clawed to death sooner or later.

EVERETT. (*Casually*) I give him two more years.

BEMIS. Gee, you know a lot of people, Everett.

EVERETT. (*Sitting*) Well, that's my spessyality, I like to study the world. And I'm willing to pay for it! (*Reflectively*) I suppose it costs me about a million dollars every year, just living the way I want to live.

BEMIS. You ain't got that much, Everett.

EVERETT. Oh, you don't know how to figure it. Suppose I'd settle down and decide I'd go into some business. Suppose I said, "I guess I'll be a banker." With my mind and education, I suppose if I put myself right to it, I *could* be a successful banker. I could be one of the most successful bankers in this country. Say I was. Say my income was a million dollars a year. Well, I give that up. I say, no sirree. I don't want to live that way. I want to live the way *I* want to, *go* wherever *I* want to, and make my own *friends*. Well, it costs me that million; one million dollars, regular, every year. But it's worth it.

BEMIS. But you're pretty lazy, too, Everett.

EVERETT. That's part of what I pay for.

BEMIS. You've got a tricky way of lookin' at it, Everett, but I don't think it's right. I know. I know what it is. You're being independent is fine, but then you say you gave up a million, that's just the excuse for being lazy.

EVERETT. Let me see. Yes. I guess you're absolutely right.

BEMIS. You had entirely the wrong idea.

EVERETT. That was exactly what I was going to say.

(*Music. The music grows louder again, and a tune*

*ends. BEMIS and EVERETT watch the entrance down right. A circus equestrienne enters. She is dressed in something like ballet clothes.)*

BEMIS. (*Admiringly*) Oh, Gee, look at her!

EVERETT. She's got a nice form.

*(The circus lady goes up R. to one of the several tubs about the stage. BEMIS crosses to her. EVERETT lights a pipe.)*

BEMIS. Hello!

CIRCUS LADY. Hello! (*She is untying her slippers, and puts on others during the following scene.*)

BEMIS. Gosh, you're beautiful.

CIRCUS LADY. Yes, indeed.

BEMIS. Did you ride in the parade this morning?

CIRCUS LADY. Yes, on the elephant.

BEMIS. I saw you up there. You looked wonderful. That old throne was going back and forth, and this way and that way.

CIRCUS LADY. It's thrilling.

BEMIS. I bet it is. Did you see her in the parade, Everett?

EVERETT. Sure, I glanced at her.

BEMIS. You're from France, aren't you?

CIRCUS LADY. Oui, oui.

BEMIS. (*To EVERETT*) She's from sunny France. (*To the circus lady*) Do those ribbons make 'em stay on tighter?

CIRCUS LADY. Oui.

BEMIS. (*Pointing to slipper*) Do they ever drink champagne out of this?

CIRCUS LADY. Yes. When they toast me.

BEMIS. I wondered whether they had special slippers to drink champagne out of.

EVERETT. I wondered about that, too.

BEMIS. (*After a grin at EVERETT*) Gee, I bet you have a lot of fun.

CIRCUS LADY. You bet.

BEMIS. They told me I could come with the circus if I wanted to. (*Reflects.*)

CIRCUS LADY. (*With sudden tenderness*) You stay right here, little boy, till you grow up. (*Patting his cheek.*)

BEMIS. Yes, ma'am. (*A ring-master's voice, off stage, is heard.*)

RING MASTER. Lalita! Mamzelle Lalita! The Queen of the Ring. In a series of unparalleled equestrian evolutions never before seen in your fair city! Mamzella Lalita!

(*Music. THE CIRCUS LADY blows a kiss to BEMIS and runs off the stage in the direction of the voice. The music of her act, Waldteufel's "Skaters," begins. The music becomes softer. BEMIS is bewildered.*)

BEMIS. Lalita! Lalita! She's my girl. No, she ain't. Everett!

EVERETT. What? (*EVERETT is about to exit.*)

BEMIS. I found myself thinking she was my girl.

EVERETT. Don't you know who your girl is?

BEMIS. I'm kind of confused.

EVERETT. Why, Millie's your girl.

BEMIS. (*Still puzzled*) Millie?

EVERETT. My niece. My sister's girl. Don't you remember? I was teasing you about her the other day.

BEMIS. (*He remembers her*) Mildred? Where is she?

EVERETT. I suppose she's waiting for you to take her to the circus.

BEMIS. Of course she is. Millie! Oo-hoo! Mildred!

MILDRED. Ooo-hoo! Charley, where are you?

BEMIS. Here I am.

(MILDRED, a girl of ten or eleven, enters through flap in tent up. She wears a party dress.)

MILDRED. I thought I'd better come myself, Charlie. Goodness gracious knows when you'd have come to the house.

BEMIS. I'm awfully sorry. Hello, Millie.

MILDRED. (*Shyly*) Hello! (*She sees EVERETT*) Hello, Uncle Everett. Mama and papa want to know if you want to stay at our house tonight.

EVERETT. (*Getting up*) Why, I don't know but what I will, Millie. When you go home you might say I'll be there.

MILDRED. Will you come in time for supper?

EVERETT. (*After a moment's thought*) Why, yes, I might probably drop in for supper. What are you going to have?

MILDRED. I don't know. Roast lamb, maybe, on account of papa being home.

EVERETT. (*Considering*) Mm-hm. Well, I'll see if I can drop over.

BEMIS. Where are you going, Everett?

EVERETT. I'm a little behind schedule. Those animals have the darndest thirst. (*Exits L.*)

MILDRED. (*Half awe, half shame*) Uncle Everett was arrested.

(*The ice cream man is heard off R., "Ice cream sandwiches!"*)

HAWKER. (*Enters R.*) Ice cream sandwiches.

BEMIS. How much?

HAWKER. Five cents.

BEMIS. Want one, Mildred?

MILDRED. Yes, thank you.

BEMIS. Let's have two of them. Let's have those two there. (*Selects two sandwiches.*)

MILDRED. What are they? Strawberry?

HAWKER. Strawberry assorted.

BEMIS. (*Gives coin*) There you are. (*HAWKER goes off R., calling, "Ice cream sandwiches," etc.*) Are they all right?

MILDRED. Oh, yes. Is it Clark's Velvet?

BEMIS. Good, ain't they?

MILDRED. Huh! (*Sits on pile of blankets L. of c.*)

BEMIS. We used to get these down at Johnny Galvin's store one time. (*Sits beside her.*)

MILDRED. Uh, huh.

BEMIS. That was the night you fell off the sled.

MILDRED. Yes, and your grandma sent me a book.

BEMIS. Which book *was* that?

MILDRED. Why, that book of fairy tales.

BEMIS. Oh, yes. Did I give that back to you?

MILDRED. (*Nodding*) It's home.

BEMIS. I was over at Suttner's pond yesterday, and that fairy ring on the bank was there again.

MILDRED. The same place?

BEMIS. Right under the locust tree. You know the big stone?

MILDRED. (*Greatly interested*) Yes.

BEMIS. Bloodroot was growing there again and pattycutters were popping up everywhere. All that yellow stuff was in a regular circle just the way we saw it. (*The lights begin to dim. Music.*)

MILDRED. Was the little smooth place there, where they danced?

BEMIS. Yeh. And I heard the music again.

MILDRED. No!

BEMIS. Yeh. It wasn't dark or maybe I might a got a look at the queen.

MILDRED. Do you think it would *have* to be dark?

*(Lights now very dim. BEMIS and MILDRED in a warm pool of light.)*

BEMIS. That time we saw her last spring it was just getting dark.

MILDRED. I don't think you'd have to have it really dark to see them.

BEMIS. No. Because it wasn't dark when we started to see her. Remember?

MILDRED. Uh, huh. I'd like to go over there and get her to play with us.

BEMIS. She'd be scared. Maybe we could bring her here and let her see the show.

MILDRED. Yes, and then she could take us back and let us see them all dancing there maybe.

BEMIS. She'd make all the fireflies come and fix them up all over the grass. Then we'd sit up there on those little pebbles and they'd all be presented to us. She could give us the gold webs to wear as mantles.

*(LALITA enters through flap in tent L. of C. and sits on tub directly back of MILDRED and BEMIS.)*

MILDRED. She'd do that.

BEMIS. Sure, wouldn't you?

LALITA. Of course, I would.

BEMIS. Would you take us over to see your subjects' dance?

LALITA. If you'd like to come.

MILDRED. *(Not looking at her)* We want to come. Isn't she beautiful?

BEMIS. *(Not looking)* Yeh. You tell them all what to do, don't you?

LALITA. All except the king.

BEMIS. What does the king do?

LALITA. He just rules and sits around.

BEMIS. Did you go down into the ground when



we saw you that time? (*She sits on stage with them.*)

LALITA. Do you remember when something went z-z-z-zum?

BEMIS. I remember. (*To MILDRED*) Do you?

MILDRED. (*Nodding*) Uh, huh.

LALITA. That was me.

BEMIS. Are you going to have a dance tonight?

LALITA. When the moon comes up. This is the first big dance of the year.

MILDRED. Will there be any elves there?

LALITA. We could get some elves.

BEMIS. Get some gnomes, too. Will you?

LALITA. I don't have much say over gnomes. Maybe the king can command some to appear.

BEMIS. Gee, whiz! I'll bet Porky would wish he could come.

MILDRED. (*Scornfully*) Oh, Porky.

BEMIS. (*To LALITA*) He don't believe in you, you know.

LALITA. (*Laughs*) What do we care?

BEMIS. (*To LALITA*) He just listens to what other people say. (*Laughing*) He's liable to say you don't exist. He'll say you're just a crazy idea.

(*Music. BEMIS, LALITA and MILDRED all start laughing. They finish their sandwiches. The lights go up.*)

BEMIS. Would you like to see the circus? I know everybody in it and can take you all around.

LALITA. Oh, I never saw a circus. Except fairy ones.

BEMIS. Ready, Millie?

MILDRED. Yes.

(*The music off-stage swells again. An act is over. Applause is heard. PORKY enters as the others are about to leave.*)

BEMIS. Hello, Porky! We're going in. Want to come with us?

PORKY. I seen all of it.

BEMIS. Come on, the four of us will see it again.

PORKY. Who else is coming?

BEMIS. Just us three and you.

PORKY. Which three?

BEMIS. Milly and me, and the fairy queen.

PORKY. And the what?

BEMIS. (*Pointing*) And her.

PORKY. (*Looking through LALITA*) Where is she? On the end of your finger?

BEMIS. Do you mean to stand there and tell me you don't see her?

MILDRED. Can't you see the lovely little gown and her little feet? (*PORKY smiles, embarrassed by their insanity.*)

BEMIS. (*To LALITA*) I don't suppose you could speak to him and tell him he's crazy. (*LALITA tries to talk.*) You're hurting her voice. That's what you're doing.

PORKY. I'm not hurting anything. It's you. You with that crazy notion. You've even got Millie believing them.

BEMIS. She just sees what I do.

PORKY. All right. What do you see? You see a lot of old stuff your grandmother tells you.

BEMIS. Mildred, you take her where she's safe. (*MILDRED and LALITA move a bit to the left of PORKY and BEMIS.*)

PORKY. Believing in things like that. Believing in fairies. He believes in fairies!

FIRST CLOWN. (*Sticks his head on from down L.*) What's the trouble here?

PORKY. He believes in fairies. He thinks he's caught a fairy and she's flying all around him. Oh, dear, dear, I'm so delicate.

FIRST CLOWN. (*Comes on, followed by second*

*clown. They wear conventional sack suits.)* You read fairy tales?

PORKY. No, his grandma tells them to him.

FIRST CLOWN. *(As in dentist's office)* Your grandmother must be cuckoo.

BEMIS. No, she ain't. She's all right.

PORKY. He believes in Santa Claus, too, don't you, Charley?

SECOND CLOWN. *(As in dentist's office)* Don't let them kid you, fellow—why, they're flying around everywhere. Don't tell things like that or they'll put you in the funny house. *(Laughter.)*

FIRST CLOWN. Sure, they will.

MILDRED. Charley, don't let them do that! Don't let them lick you!

BEMIS. *(After a silent struggle)* Maybe they're right. Huh, Milly?

*(LALITA moves away from BEMIS. Exits left, masked by clowns.)*

MILDRED. Why, Skeeter!

BEMIS. Maybe they're right.

MILDRED. Charley Bemis! He insulted what you believe in!

BEMIS. I'm sorry, Millie.

PORKY. *(In a sing-song)* Charley's afraid! Skeeter Bemis is afraid! He don't dare answer back!

*(GRANDPA and GRANDMA come on R. CLOWNS laugh.)*

GRANDPA. What's all the trouble out here?

MILDRED. *(In tears)* Porky Mason's making fun of us. He's making fun of Charley because we've seen a fairy. And Charley's letting him!

FIRST CLOWN. The kid's got him licked, all right.

GRANDMA. Got who licked?

FIRST CLOWN. Got your little Charley Bemis licked.

PORKY. (*To GRANDPA*) Sure, he don't dare say anything. I told him he believes in Santa Claus, too.

GRANDMA. Whatever he said, Skeeter isn't afraid of him.

MILDRED. (*In tears*) Yes, he is. He's acting like a coward.

PORKY. He's a sissy. I told him exactly to his face and he backed water.

GRANDPA. You said that to Skeeter's face?

BEMIS. (*Jumping up on tub just left of center*) No, no, Grandpa. He's only telling that to what you see here. I'm not who you think I am. I'm a fellow from New York that don't dare face anybody. I don't dare face my boss. That's who I am. I ain't Skeeter. Skeeter's all right. Skeeter's just as brave as you think he is. Skeeter would fight for anything he believed in. (*Desperately*) Wouldn't you, Skeeter?

(SKEETER, a small boy, appears from under the tent cloth, c. Comes down to the group.)

SKEETER. (*Calmly*) Hey! What seems to be the trouble?

MILDRED. Porky's making fun of our seeing the fairy and now she can't talk.

SKEETER. (*To LALITA*) Can't you?

LALITA. I can to you.

SKEETER. What's your name?

LALITA. Lalita—Mildred—Sally.

BEMIS. (*Softly*) Sally?

SKEETER. (*Wheeling. To PORKY*) What did you say about me?

FIRST CLOWN. He said that you were afraid.

SECOND CLOWN. He said you put it all over you.

SKEETER. You fellows keep out of this. You're only a couple of clowns. (*EVERETT comes on. So do BARNUM and BAILEY, the ANIMAL TRAINER, the ICE CREAM MAN and the CIRCUS LADY. To PORKY*) Now just kindly repeat what was said while I wasn't here.

PORKY. I said you believed in Santy Claus.

SKEETER. Well, what about it? Is that any of your business?

PORKY. Now you're trying to tell me you've got a fairy. I said I couldn't see her.

SKEETER. All right. Who said you had to? You started to make fun of me and of Mildred and of what Mildred and me believed in. That's an insult. (*Begins to take his coat off*) Stand back, you people. You be careful, Queen.

PORKY. Oh, wait a minute, Charley.

SKEETER. I'll wait to give you one chance to apologize. (*He says "a-pole-agize."*) If you don't apologize and before I count ten, I'm going to give you a licking that you'll remember all your born days. *Now, one, and two and three and four—*

PORKY. I wasn't trying to hurt him any.

SKEETER. And eight and nine and—

PORKY. Wait. I apologize. (*A-pole-agize. Turns away. Others laugh.*)

SKEETER. To Milly.

PORKY. I'm sorry, Milly.

SKEETER. And to me.

PORKY. I didn't mean to make fun of you.

SKEETER. (*After a pause*) All right.

PORKY. Want me to apologize to your fairy too?

SKEETER. (*Angrily*) What?

PORKY. Of course, I can't see her. But if you want me to—

SKEETER. (*Witheringly*) You can't see her. Of course you can't see her. You can't hardly see any-

thing. You're too dumb. How can you be expected to apologize to someone you can't see? Ain't I right, Grandpa and Grandma?

GRANDPA. Certainly, you're right. (*PORKY starts to leave. SKEETER is putting on his coat again, helped by MILDRED and LALITA. GRANDPA turns to BARNUM and BAILEY*) Pretty fine grandson I've got here, ain't he?

BARNUM. He's a boy to be proud of.

EVERETT. Independent, that's what he is.

FIRST CLOWN. He's O.K.

SECOND CLOWN. Sure he is.

BEMIS. What about me?

SKEETER. What?

BEMIS. (*Steps down from tub*) I'm in trouble.

SKEETER. Oh, you? You're the fellow that's been using my name, ain't you?

BEMIS. Yes.

SKEETER. Well, that's all right. You had a right to it in a way. Wait a minute. Look, Grandma. I just thought of something.

GRANDMA. What, Skeeter?

SKEETER. Why, I won't be home in time for supper tonight. I don't know when I'll be back.

GRANDPA. What's the trouble, boy?

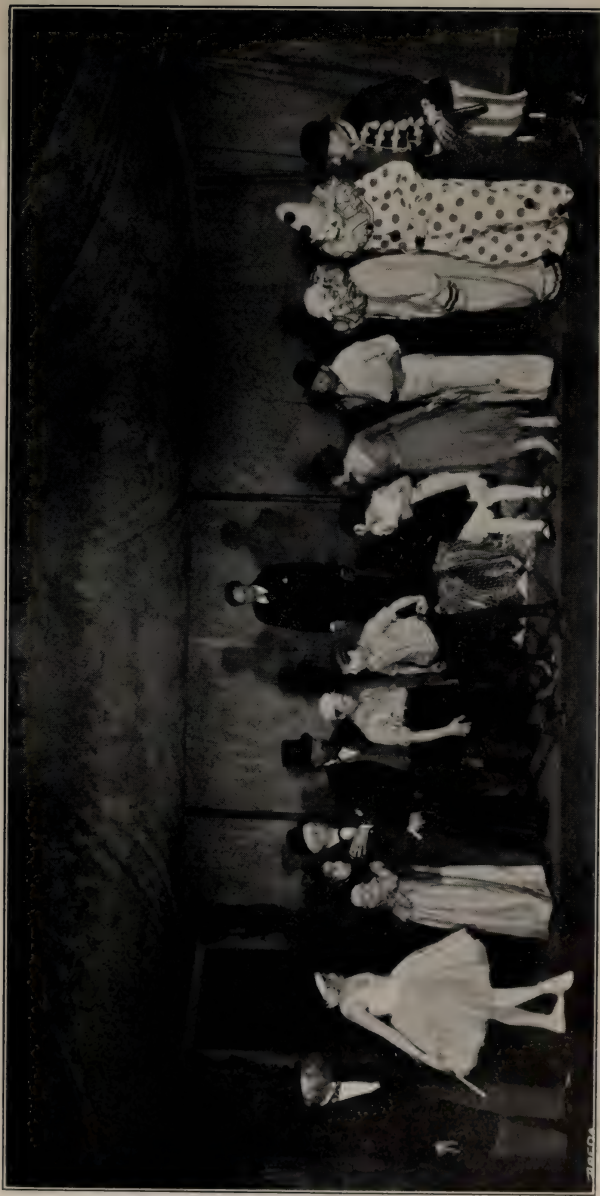
SKEETER. I've got a little job on my hands, with this fellow here.

GRANDMA. Where are you going, Skeeter?

SKEETER. (*Looking at BEMIS steadily*) We're going years and years away from here. This old thing and me are going up on an adventure. We're going to an office. We're going to J. H. Porter and Company, Incorporated, and avenge a woman's good name. Come on!

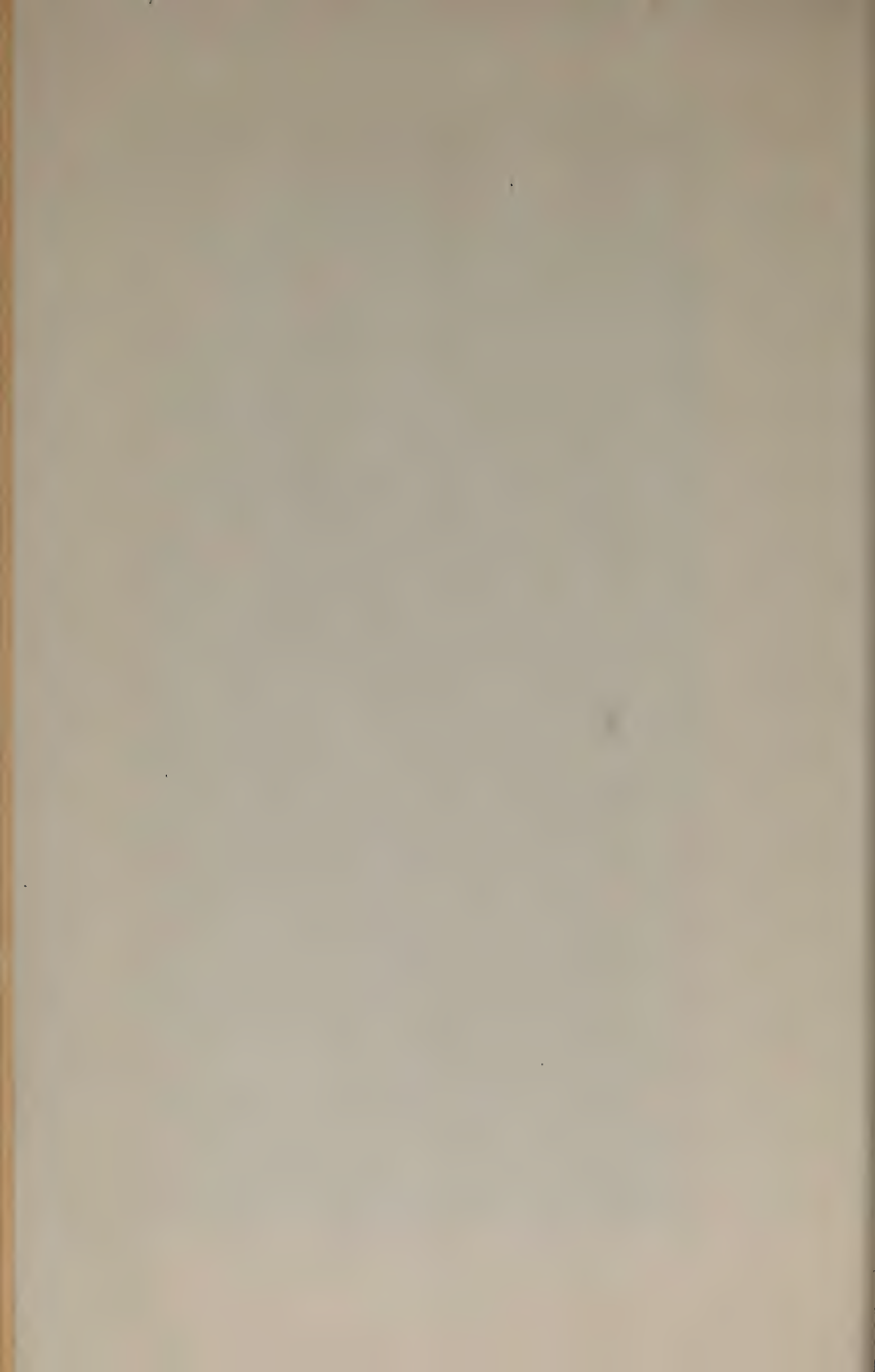
(*Music. Takes his hand and starts with him upstage. The band begins. The crowd cheers.*)

END OF SCENE III.



"THE WISDOM TOOTH"

See Page 71





## ACT II

### SCENE IV

**AT RISE:** *At MR. PORTER'S office. MR. PORTER'S desk is at an angle in the upper right corner of the room, in line with windows down right and center. His large chair is behind the desk, so that when seated in it he half faces the audience. On the desk, which is a large flat affair, is the miscellaneous collection of objects usually found at such places. There are also an office writing set, one or two books, a file, basket containing papers. A departmental telephone, one for general use, and a small desk lamp also on the desk. On the walls are two or three photographs showing factories and harbor shipping scenes. Up left is a stenographer's desk and chair. Beside MR. PORTER'S desk are two large comfortable leather chairs. One in front of each window. There is a door down left.*

**SCENE:** *The scene is only mistily discernible as Curtain rises. The only things clear are the faces of BEMIS and SKEETER, who stand in the middle of the room.*

**SKEETER.** *(His eyes closed)* —and seven and eight and nine and ten. *(The lights go up enough to disclose the whole scene.)* This is it, ain't it?

**BEMIS.** Yeh, it's his office, all right. *(They look about them)* That's where he sits when you go in.

**SKEETER.** *(Pointing to chair at the right of PORTER'S desk)* And that's where you sit, huh?

BEMIS. No. You stand like this and give him whatever the paper is.

SKEETER. No. *You sit* in that chair.

BEMIS. Sure, I will *now*.

SKEETER. Well, now that I've brought you here, do you think you can handle it alone?

BEMIS. I'll have to do the talking, I guess.

SKEETER. Maybe I ought to hit him.

BEMIS. No. It's got to be done without any of that stuff. I don't mean that wouldn't be all right, but I think I'll do it another way.

SKEETER. You wouldn't be afraid to hit him, would you?

BEMIS. Don't, now, or I *will* give him a sock in the jaw. You go over there and don't open your mouth. I can take care of this. (SKEETER *sits in chair at the stenographer's desk.*) Just leave me alone now.

SKEETER. (*Considering it*) All right. Good. (*Goes left above door.*)

BEMIS. There he comes. (BEMIS *goes up to window.* MR. PORTER *enters and faces about through the doorway.*)

PORTER. Oh, Sparrow!

(PORTER *sits at desk.* SPARROW *comes to the door.*  
SKEETER *crosses, sits on corner of desk.*)

SPARROW. Did you want me, Mr. Porter?

PORTER. When Bemis comes in in the morning, will you tell him to turn all the A. and B. accounts over to the credit department? Mr. Jackson wants to make one or two changes.

SPARROW. I sent 'em up this afternoon, Mr. Porter.

PORTER. Oh, did you? I wanted Bemis's O.K. on them before they went over. Jackson says he's his right arm, now.

SPARROW. I'll get 'em if you want me to.

PORTER. Oh, it's all right. Just tell Bemis to look them over himself in the morning.

SPARROW. Yes, sir. (*Turns to go. BEMIS comes down to the doorway*) Here he is. (*Exits.*)

PORTER. Hello, Bemis. Get fixed up all right?

BEMIS. Yes, I feel fine now. (*PORTER is arranging his papers, preparing to go.*)

PORTER. I wish you'd go up and help Mr. Jackson tomorrow on these A. and B. accounts. (*BEMIS lingers in doorway—pause.*) All right. See you tomorrow, Bemis.

(*BEMIS motions SKEETER away. SKEETER sits on chair up left.*)

BEMIS. Could you spare us a minute, Mr. Porter?

PORTER. (*Looking up*) Why, of course. What seems to be the trouble? (*Amused.*)

BEMIS. I want to have a very frank talk with you.

PORTER. Really?

BEMIS. First of all, I want to resign, Mr. Porter. I know I ought to resign with Mr. Phillips, but I want to have a chance to talk with you and that's why I want to resign with you, if you don't mind.

PORTER. Why, I didn't know you were thinking of leaving us, Bemis.

BEMIS. Yes, I've got to, in order to be able to talk to you.

PORTER. That's a strange point of view.

BEMIS. I've gotta get it out of my mind that you're the big boss or I wouldn't be able to talk to you at all. (*SKEETER indicates that BEMIS should sit down.*)

PORTER. I see. You want to say something that you think I might criticize?

BEMIS. That's it.

PORTER. You have me puzzled, Bemis. I can't imagine what it is.

BEMIS. All right, I'll tell you. Will you just regard me as a man that isn't working for you any more—just sorta calling on you?

PORTER. (*Rises*) Won't you sit down, Mr. Bemis? (*Indicates the chair to the left of his desk.*)

BEMIS. Thank you very much. (*He looks at SKEETER.* SKEETER *nods consent and BEMIS sits down.*)

PORTER. (*Opening a drawer of desk*) Have a cigar?

BEMIS. No, thank you. I prefer one of my own. (*Produces package of cigarettes.* PORTER *gives him a light.*) Thank you.

PORTER. (*Seats himself comfortably*) Now, then.

BEMIS. No danger of anybody coming in here?

PORTER. (*Into department phone*) If anybody wants to speak to me, Miss Keedrick, I'm in conference.

BEMIS. (*Turns his chair and faces PORTER*) Mr. Porter, what's the idea of firing that blonde?

PORTER. What blonde?

BEMIS. I don't know what her name was. We call her the Duchess. You gave her the gate yesterday.

PORTER. Oh! Well, the Duchess in private life was a Miss Hartman. Her first name I don't know.

BEMIS. It's irrelevant. (*He is proud of that word.*)

PORTER. That's good. Otherwise I'd have to get in touch with the timekeeper.

BEMIS. You discharged her, I believe.

PORTER. I did.

BEMIS. Well, certain things that happened, Mr. Porter, have given me a lot of new ideas about things. Understand, I'm talking now just as a caller.

PORTER. I'd be the last to deny it.

BEMIS. Then, from an outside point of view, I just wanta tell you, Mr. Porter, that I think it was a despise-a—despicable thing for you to do.

PORTER. (*Relieved by the correct word*) Despicable. Could you be a little more explicit?

BEMIS. I certainly can. I wish to say in behalf of that girl that I don't know from Adam that she was just startin' out to be a stenographer and that she got the gate after she'd only been here a couple of days and that you tried to make up to her. Am I correct or not? (*He rushes on*) I want to get the various points straightened out, Mr. Porter. I mean as follows: I happened to have a talk with the lady while coming up in the elevator yesterday, and she struck me as the kind of a person who'd be very—(*he chooses a word*)—zealous about her work. And from our brief talk, I got the idea that a great deal depended on her success or non-success with her position. I told her all she had to do was to be prompt and use her brains and she needn't worry. And this afternoon, another clerk, whose name I won't mention, told me that her good looks had been her downfall. I just wanted to come to you and say I think that's a pretty rotten piece of business. If it's true. (*Pause. Drops voice*) Now you see why I resigned first. (*Rises.*) I guess that's about all I had to say, except that when I get another job I'll try to get that girl a position there, too. (*BEMIS starts for the door.*) Come on, Skeeter. To hell with him.

PORTER. Bemis, just a minute. (*BEMIS and SKEETER stop.*) I hope you get your job all right. But may I make a suggestion?

BEMIS. Certainly.

PORTER. Don't get her one.

BEMIS. Why not?

PORTER. Because, as I told her, just before she

left yesterday, it would be wise for her to go back to business school and resume her studies.

BEMIS. She needs a job.

PORTER. Then I hope she gets one, but not as a stenographer, Bemis. (*Rises*) May I invite you back into the office again, as my guest? (BEMIS is waved into the seat again.) Bemis, at what time do you think stenographers ought to come to work?

BEMIS. Some decent hour, around nine o'clock.

PORTER. By an odd coincidence, nine o'clock is what I think, too. Miss Hartman, or the Duchess, if you prefer, apparently agreed with me, the day she was engaged. I doubt if you met her in the elevator while coming to work in the morning.

BEMIS. No. It was at two o'clock, when I come back from lunch, yesterday.

PORTER. *She* had been out since twelve. And on the three days in which we were honored with royalty, she appeared consecutively—(*consulting cards*)—at nine fifteen, nine thirty-five, and ten six. I believe the subway had its agents at work to retard her trains. On arriving at the office she mitigated the discomforts of an alien and seemingly unfriendly atmosphere by the solace of chewing gum. Duchess or no Duchess, she chewed it more noisily than I had believed possible. I should like to have you look at a letter which she transcribed on a typewriter the evening of her second day. You can take it with you, if you wish, as I've had several copies made to show my friends. (*Hands letter to BEMIS*) That interesting anagram at the top stands for "T. J. Smith, Esq. Dear Sir."

BEMIS. Mr. Porter— (*SKEETER quickly touches his arm. Bus.*) Well, I misjudged her, that's all.

PORTER. I wish I could put to rest your suspicion concerning any amorous overtures from me, a commoner, to Her Highness. As a matter of fact, and

this is in the strictest confidence, her own decided friendliness put me in such a state of mind that during the last few hours of her stay I was obliged to have Miss Keedrick chaperone us. Now I don't wish to appear as a saint in your eyes, Bemis, but I should like you to recognize in me a firm believer in the sanctity of the office. Were there any other points you wished to discuss?

BEMIS. No.

PORTER. Well, Bemis, I want to thank you for your interest in this matter.

BEMIS. (*Rises*) I told you what I thought, and I was mistaken. All I can say is I'm sorry I took up your time. (*To SKEETER*) Come on, Kid. (*SKEETER rises to go with him as he crosses to door. PORTER rises.*)

PORTER. (*Puzzled*) Just a minute, Bemis. There is something I don't quite understand, Bemis. Let me look at you. (*He crosses to BEMIS's left, not noticing SKEETER.*) I don't think I ever really knew you before. (*SKEETER crosses and sits in lower corner of desk.*)

BEMIS. I'm just a clerk in your office. I mean I *was* just a clerk.

PORTER. Yes, I know that. When I bothered to think of you at all, I regarded you as an efficient clerk. But today you're something more than that. You're apparently an individual. God! Can it be you *are* an individual?

BEMIS. You don't suppose I'd come in here and make a monkey of myself if I wasn't, do you?

PORTER. That's the odd part of it. You didn't make a monkey of yourself. (*With sudden understanding*) Well, I'll be damned. I've been puzzled for the last fifteen minutes by a problem that had a very simple answer. (*Very casually*) I see what you are now. You happen to be a man.

BEMIS. So long, Mr. Porter. (*Starts out.*)

PORTER. (*As BEMIS and SKEETER reach the door*) Just one minute more. (*BEMIS and SKEETER take a step toward him*) Do you know where you're going to work?

BEMIS. No, sir.

PORTER. I see. I don't suppose you'd reconsider your decision.

BEMIS. That's up to you, Mr. Porter. I thought you'd be a little sore.

PORTER. I was at first. It was a bit of a shock to have a clerk criticise me the way you did. But you see I now recognize you're something more than a clerk.

BEMIS. I'd like to stay, sir.

PORTER. (*Crossing to door*) You would? Then that's that. I hope you'll excuse me. I think Mr. Jackson will be glad to hear you're going to stick with us. (*Exits.*)

BEMIS. (*To SKEETER*) I've still got my job.

SKEETER. What do you care? What if you didn't?

BEMIS. Sure.

SKEETER. All right now?

BEMIS. Yes.

SKEETER. Then so long. (*Starts to go.*)

BEMIS. (*In a panic*) Wait! I need you.

SKEETER. Why?

BEMIS. To help me keep on being a man.

SKEETER. But you *are* one now.

BEMIS. Only because you were helping me.

SKEETER. But I didn't do anything. You took charge. You got through it all right. You got through it fine.

BEMIS. But, gee, I'll be scared if you go.

SKEETER. If you are, then I'd never want to see you again. I can't be with you all the time.

BEMIS. Where are you going?



SKEETER. Just back to Grandpa and Grandma. You'd like me to be with them, wouldn't you?

BEMIS. Sure. But I've got to kind of keep in touch with you.

SKEETER. Don't worry about that. I'll let you hear from me every now and then.

BEMIS. How?

SKEETER. All you'll have to do will be to think of me, and then gradually, why, it'll get so that even when you ain't thinking of me, you'll know I'm trying to help you.

BEMIS. Yeh?

SKEETER. Sure. Sometimes when you're trying to think something out that you ought to do, you'll feel me tug at your coat. I'll say— (*He tugs at BEMIS's coat*) "Come on, make up your mind." (*They look at each other and smile. SKEETER offers his hand. BEMIS shakes it.*) So long.

BEMIS. (*After SKEETER has gone*) So long. (*Smiles. SKEETER goes to door*) Gee, I certainly was a nice little kid. (*SKEETER exits. BEMIS stretches out his arms*) Skeeter! Skeeter!

(*Music.*)

CURTAIN

### ACT III

AT RISE: *Curtain rises on the same picture as when BEMIS sat before the fireplace at MRS. POOLE'S after SALLY had left him to his reverie. His tooth has made a swelling.*

MRS. POOLE *comes down stairs and goes to the street door.*

BEMIS. Skeeter! Skeeter! (*Pause.*) That's what I should have done. And that's what I didn't do.

MRS. POOLE. (*Enters. Comes down to couch*)

Mr. Bemis. (*BEMIS looks up quickly.*) Mr. Bemis, I'm sorry to disturb you.

BEMIS. (*Puzzled*) That's all right. I was just kind of thinking.

MRS. POOLE. Do you want to see a man who says he works with you named Sparrow?

BEMIS. What time is it?

MRS. POOLE. About ten-thirty. Do you want to see him?

BEMIS. Sparrow? From our office?

MRS. POOLE. So he says. It was so late I told him to wait outside. I was afraid maybe——

BEMIS. Yes, I know him. It's all right.

MRS. POOLE. (*Going to hall door*) I'll let him in, then. Is your tooth better?

BEMIS. I guess so.

MRS. POOLE. (*In doorway*) Can I do anything for you?

BEMIS. No, thanks. (*MRS. POOLE exits.*) Nothing anybody can do, except laugh.

(*SPARROW enters—followed by MRS. POOLE.*)

SPARROW. Hello, Charley. Thought I'd drop in and say hello. (*Comes down in front of sofa.*)

BEMIS. Hello, Sparrow—— (*Rises, crosses to MRS. POOLE*) Mrs. Poole, do you mind him being here?

MRS. POOLE. Why, of course not. Why should I?

BEMIS. I was joking.

MRS. POOLE. Why, you know it's an honor to have friends of yours drop in.

BEMIS. Mr. Sparrow, this is Mrs. Poole.

SPARROW. How do you do?

MRS. POOLE. Excuse me for asking you to wait out there, but you see he's had a toothache and I didn't know——

SPARROW. Yes, I know he had. (*Looking at BEMIS*) Why, Charley, your face is all swelled up.

MRS. POOLE. (*Turns to BEMIS*) It certainly is. S'pose a compress would do any good? It won't take a minute to fix one. (*MRS. POOLE crosses up.*)

BEMIS. Please——never mind it.

SPARROW. (*Laughing*) He'd look funny with his head all tied up. The knot on top of your dome.

BEMIS. Yeah. they'd laugh at me, wouldn't they?

SPARROW. Sure.

BEMIS. Get it, Mrs. Poole. I ought to wear it. And Mrs. Poole! Remember that fellow Palmer that was here a couple of months ago?

MRS. POOLE. That Bolshevicky?

BEMIS. Yes. He said he was a Socialist. If he'd had a toothache, would you have got him a compress?

MRS. POOLE. I should say not.

BEMIS. Shooting off all those crazy ideas just because he believed in 'em.

MRS. POOLE. I don't know what you're gettin' at.

BEMIS. I was just thinking how nice it is not to be a fellow like him.

MRS. POOLE. Do you feel a little dizzy?

BEMIS. I'm a lot more than dizzy.

MRS. POOLE. I'll get that poultice. Want more light? I'll give it to you anyway. (*Presses switch. Exit in hallway. Lights up.*)

BEMIS. (*Ironically, as SPARROW watches him*) Yes, turn the lights on.

SPARROW. (*After a pause*) What the hell's the matter with you?

BEMIS. I've just found out about myself.

SPARROW. Well, you want to be careful, Charley.

BEMIS. Why, don't you know me? I'm *very* careful.

SPARROW. (*Looking at watch*) Why don't you lie down? You'd be more comfortable, maybe.

BEMIS. Don't mind me, Sparrow. I've been thinking. That ain't good for me.

SPARROW. (*Laughing nervously*) I guess you was surprised seeing me come droppin' in.

BEMIS. I wouldn't be surprised, now. You don't live *anywhere* here, do you?

SPARROW. No. To tell the truth, I'm in a kind of a little jam. You got any money?

BEMIS. Oh, yes, I've saved a lot.

SPARROW. Yeh, I heard you had.

BEMIS. Yeh, I've used my brains.

SPARROW. (*Out of his depth*) I only want a couple of bucks. I've got to get up to a Hundred and Twentieth Street in a taxi. I'm taking a girl home from the Capitol, see. She's around at my brother-in-law's on Eighty-second Street. I had just enough to pay the taxi there and I intended to get some jack from the brother-in-law. But the brother-in-law ain't home. So I told her I'd get *another* taxi and parked her there.

BEMIS. Here's some money.

SPARROW. Thanks.

BEMIS. Now we're a little more alike.

(KATIE enters—crosses to dining room and exits.)

SPARROW. What? (*Rises.*)

BEMIS. There I go thinking again.

SPARROW. Can I use your phone?

BEMIS. Sure.

SPARROW. (*Into phone*) Kindly give me Lenox two-three-hundred. (*To BEMIS*) What do you do? Put a nickel in this box, huh?

BEMIS. Yes. (*SPARROW hunts for nickel; can't find one.*) Here's one.

SPARROW. Thanks. I didn't have enough to tip the guy. (*BEMIS puts nickel in box. To phone*) Hello! Yellow Taxi Company? Would you kindly send a car to Eight-six West Seventy-ninth Street, right away? What? Bemis. Mr. Bemis.

BEMIS. (*Sotto voce*) Bemis, the great man.

SPARROW. (*In phone*) B-e-m-i-s—— No. "I" as in "ivory."

BEMIS. (*Sotto voce*) "S" as in "success."

SPARROW. (*Into phone*) That's right. How soon will you be here? Fine! (*Puts up phone*) Much obliged to you, Charley.

BEMIS. That's all right. Good night. (*Crosses over to piano stool.*)

SPARROW. (*Timidly*) I gotta wait till the taxi comes.

BEMIS. (*Suddenly conscious of his abstraction*) Oh, sure.

SPARROW. It won't be long.

MRS. POOLE. (*Enters with poultice*) Here we are.

SPARROW. (*Sits on sofa*) You want to take care of that tooth.

MRS. POOLE. (*Unfolding poultice on table at L. of sofa*) I guess this will fix you up. I wish I had a little toothache gum, too.

BEMIS. I got some on it.

MRS. POOLE. Oh, have you? 'That used to help Mr. Curry a lot when he was troubled. Better sit down. (*She applies poultice.*)

SPARROW. You're gonna look awful funny.

BEMIS. Sparrow—I *am* awful funny.

SPARROW. Did you go to the dentist I sent you to?

BEMIS. Sure. Just as I do everything.

MRS. POOLE. (*Adjusting the poultice*) Is it too hot?

BEMIS. No, it's fine. Does it look funny, Sparrow?

SPARROW. (*Laughing*) It looks like you had the mumps.

BEMIS. Well, you can begin the laughing.

MRS. POOLE. Never mind about laughing. That's flaxseed in there. That draws the pain right out.

BEMIS. Mrs. Poole, what if I was Socialist?

MRS. POOLE. If you was a Socialist like that Palmer I wouldn't have you in here, you know that.

BEMIS. Yes, I found that out tonight.

MRS. POOLE. Yes—'cept you ain't.

BEMIS. No, I'm a good clerk. I save my money and work hard and I mind my own business and I watch my own ideas.

MRS. POOLE. Of course you do. (*To SPARROW*) I always keep flaxseed in the house. My mother used to say, "Give me flaxseed and I don't care what happens." And nothing ever did either. (*To BEMIS*) I guess you're all fixed—

BEMIS. Thank you. (*Glances at hall door.*)

MRS. POOLE. That's all right. No trouble at all. (*Goes to dining room.*)

BEMIS. What time is it now?

SPARROW. Ten thirty-four exactly.

(MRS. POOLE looks through dining-room door on an off-stage clock.)

MRS. POOLE. It says ten twenty-eight here. You know I think the radium they put on them clocks makes them slow. (*Exits in dining room.*)

SPARROW. It'll be here. They said, "Right away."

(*The front door is closed. FRY and KELLOGG are heard in the vestibule. There is laughter, like that in the dentist's. KELLOGG and FRY enter. They look at BEMIS.*)

BEMIS. Toothache.

KELLOGG. Look at little Charley Bemis!

FRY. Looks as if you had the mumps.

SPARROW. That's just what I was saying.

BEMIS. Mr. Sparrow: Mr. Kellogg and Mr. Fry. All members of this club.

KELLOGG. (*Shaking hands*) How are you?

SPARROW. (*The group is down R.*) Glad to know you, Mr. Fry.

KELLOGG. I'm Mr. Kellogg. This is Mr. Fry. (*SPARROW shakes FRY's hand.*) Oh! My mistake!

FRY. Glad to meet you.

SPARROW. Glad to meet both you gentlemen.

BEMIS. Mr. Sparrow's down at the office with me. (*Gets chair and brings it down for SPARROW.*)

KELLOGG. Oh, is that so? I hear he pretty nearly runs the place. (*Sits R.*)

SPARROW. Yes, sir. He pretty nearly does.

BEMIS. Tell them how I bawled out the boss today. (*Genial laugh from SPARROW. SPARROW sits.*)

FRY. (*To BEMIS*) So it's really a tooth, is it, Bemis?

BEMIS. A wisdom tooth.

FRY. You want to be careful of a tooth.

KELLOGG. Live up this way, Mr. Sparrow?  
(SPARROW *is at L. of KELLOGG.*)

SPARROW. No, just dropped in for a little call. I ordered a taxi and I'm waiting for it to get here.

KELLOGG. It won't be long. They give us pretty good service here. (FRY *sits on sofa.*)

SPARROW. You gentlemen business men? (BEMIS *stands behind the trio. He looks at each as they speak.*)

KELLOGG. I'm in the contracting line. Mr. Fry here's in the banking line.

SPARROW. Oh, is that so? Well, that ought to be a good line, right now.

FRY. Have a cigar?

SPARROW. Thank you very kindly.

FRY. Yes, things are looking pretty good right now.

SPARROW. (*Lighting cigar*) I guess they're looking pretty good generally right now. I was talking with a gentleman in the hotel line going over on the Jersey ferry last Sunday, and he tells me that every hotel in New York is packed right now. That's supposed to be a very healthy sign. (BEMIS *comes a step down stage.*)

KELLOGG. Well, I imagine that's the Spring buyers right now. Every Spring the hotels are full of out-of-town buyers, you know. They come on business, of course, and then they stay on if the weather's pleasant and go to the theatres and so on.

FRY. It's a healthy sign, though.

KELLOGG. Oh, sure it's a healthy sign. A man I do business with in Detroit was here last week and he couldn't *get* a room at the Biltmore. (*Pause.*) Wired ahead, too. (*Pause.*) He finally managed to get somewhere's else.

SPARROW. I guess the whole country's lookin' up, for that matter. The president of our company was



telling me the other day that our business had practically tripled in the last year.

FRY. I was down in Washington a couple of weeks ago and a Congressman I talked with said that as soon as the tax problems get settled we're in for the biggest expansion in twenty-five years.

SPARROW. If they can get France and them other countries to pay up, I guess we'll be sittin' pretty in a year or two.

FRY. They'll never come through. Europe's broke and we might as well admit it.

SPARROW. They won't be broke as long as they can borrow from us. *(He laughs at his humor. FRY and KELLOGG join him.)*

KELLOGG. Oh, France'll come out of it all right, I guess.

SPARROW. Sure. Only I wouldn't lend her another nickel. We've got enough to worry about.

KELLOGG. I'll say we have. It's all you can do now to collect bills.

FRY. Well, money's a little tight everywhere now, I guess.

SPARROW. Yeh, times could be better.

KELLOGG. Yeh, you take the average man; he don't realize how serious things are. *(BEMIS laughs.)*

SPARROW. What are you laughing at?

BEMIS. I've just been watching myself.

*(Doorbell is heard.)*

SPARROW. There she is. *(Rises, goes up, gets hat.)*

*(KATIE enters from dining room.)*

SPARROW. *(To KATIE)* Never mind, Miss. It's for me. *(KATIE exits in dining room.)* Thanks for

letting me drop in, Charley. Well, good night, gentlemen. Glad I had this talk with you.

KELLOGG. So am I.

FRY. Sorry you can't stay longer.

SPARROW. Yeh, so am I. But I've got to be getting home. Good-night, Charley.

KELLOGG. Good-night.

FRY. Good-night. (*BEMIS sits on sofa. SPARROW exits.*)

KELLOGG. He's a bright fellow—— (*BEMIS does not reply. As KELLOGG goes into hall*) You ain't sore at anything, are you?

BEMIS. No. Good-night. (*The men start up the stairs, saying "good-night."*) You can't be sore at a looking glass. You can't be sore if somebody shows you one and one make two. I ain't that much of a fool.

KATIE. (*Enters from dining room—goes to foot of stairs and calls softly*) Miss Field! Miss Field!

SALLY. (*Off*) Yes——

KATIE. I've got a sandwich and a glass of milk. Shall I bring it up?

SALLY. (*Upstairs*) No, Katie, don't bother. I'll come down for it.

KATIE. All right. (*Starts for dining room.*)

SALLY. (*Upstairs*) Katie!

KATIE. (*Going back to stairs*) Yes, ma'am, what?

SALLY. (*Off stage, almost inaudibly*) Is Mr. Bemis still there?

KATIE. Yes, ma'am. (*Starts toward dining room—stops, to BEMIS*) Does that make you feel better?

BEMIS. Yeh.

KATIE. It looks awful funny. I'm glad it makes you feel all right. (*KATIE exits into dining-room.*)

(*BEMIS crosses to piano stool. SALLY comes down stairs and enters.*)

SALLY. I'm glad you put a poultice on.

BEMIS. Why don't you laugh?

SALLY. Charley! Do you hate me?

BEMIS. How could I hate you?

SALLY. I hurt you. I know I hurt you a lot.

BEMIS. You told me what was good for me.  
That always hurts.

SALLY. I told you what I thought I saw; some  
one who was fine.

BEMIS. I've been seeing him, too. I don't see  
how you ever saw him with me standing in the way.  
What you saw was the little boy I used to be.

SALLY. Yes, perhaps.

BEMIS. I guess my back was turned towards him  
too long. I hardly knew him when I saw him.

SALLY. He's never been far away.

BEMIS. (*After a rueful smile*) I'm changed,  
Sally. And I changed long before you met me. I  
didn't realize I'd change as much as all that.

SALLY. As what?

BEMIS. I've gone so far from the fellow I used  
to be, it's a wonder I even hung on to my name.  
That was the only thing that made me different  
from thousands of other fellows, my face was differ-  
ent. "Charley Bemis, that's the one with a different  
face." You see, Sally, people like me ain't born,  
they're just printed. Anyway, you had a lucky es-  
cape. (*He goes to the sofa.*)

(FARRADAY, with MRS. FARRADAY, suddenly bursts  
into the room.)

FARRADAY. Oh, excuse me.

MRS. FARRADAY. Have you been here all eve-  
ning?

SALLY. Yes. Did you like the picture?

FARRADAY. Very good. Surprised me. (*Starts  
to go.*)

BEMIS. (*Kneeling on sofa, his back to the audience*) Well, Mrs. Poole was right for once.

FARRADAY. She certainly was.

MRS. FARRADAY. How's your tooth, Mr. Bemis?

BEMIS. It's coming through fine now.

MRS. FARRADAY. Have you got a good dentist?

BEMIS. I've got one I'm satisfied with.

FARRADAY. (*To MRS. FARRADAY*) We ought to send him to Dr. Ferris.

MRS. FARRADAY. Oh, yes.

FARRADAY. (*Consulting a notebook*) Dr. Ferris is a friend of ours and is very good. (*Comes down to end of sofa.*)

BEMIS. I don't doubt it.

FARRADAY. Yes, he's one of the best in New York. (*Looks at notebook*) I know I can get him to make a very reasonable fee for you.

BEMIS. Thanks very much, but I don't think I'll change the one I've got. He's got a book down in his office I want to read again.

FARRADAY. I'm afraid you can't judge the skill of a dentist by his book.

BEMIS. It's just an old bum book of fairy tales that I want to read again.

FARRADAY. (*Looking up. Pleasantly*) But we're talking about dentists.

BEMIS. I wasn't. You were. I believe in my dentist. And if a man believes in his dentist, why, he ought to go to him. Ain't I right, Gran—Sally?

SALLY. Until you tell yourself you're wrong.

BEMIS. Yes. (*To FARRADAY*) You know I don't mean your dentist isn't all right. (*Very pleasantly*) I guess everybody has the best dentist.

FARRADAY. I guess you can't change a man's opinion about his dentist. (*Starts up.*)

BEMIS. But about everything else, though, eh?

FARRADAY. About politics, yes.

BEMIS. (*He kneels on sofa with his back to au-*

*dience*) Do you know what I really think is the matter with Coolidge?

FARRADAY. What?

BEMIS. He seems to be afraid to say what he thinks.

FARRADAY. (*Pause*) Mr. Bemis, I think you're absolutely right.

MRS. FARRADAY. I'm so sorry your tooth has been bothering you.

BEMIS. Thank you very much.

FARRADAY. Well, it appears you have a good dentist. (*Looking at SALLY*) I guess you will be all right. Good-night. (*Starts out.*)

MRS. FARRADAY. Good-night. (*The FARRADAYS go up stairs.*)

BEMIS and SALLY. Good-night. (*BEMIS gets off sofa—smiles.*)

SALLY. Charley, don't you feel a little stronger now?

BEMIS. (*Amused by himself*) Yes. I wouldn't be afraid to face New York now. I wouldn't be afraid to talk up to the boss now.

SALLY. Perhaps now you don't need to.

BEMIS. (*Seriously*) No, I wouldn't feel right until I done that, too. I've a good mind to go to his office tomorrow and tell him what I think.

SALLY. Well, that's the way to feel, Charley; but now that you know that, I don't think you need to bother about actually doing it.

BEMIS. Oh, I've got to! I'll show him there's one man in that office that ain't afraid.

SALLY. (*Laughing*) Don't be too rash about it, Charley.

BEMIS. That's the whole point! You was the one that realized that, Sally.

SALLY. And I was theoretically right.

BEMIS. You were right in every old way. I've

got a good mind to call him up right now on the phone.

SALLY. I wouldn't do it at this hour.

BEMIS. Why not?

SALLY. (*Laughing again*) I think it would be silly; he's probably in bed.

KATIE. (*Entering*) Shall I bring it out here, Miss Field?

SALLY. No, I'll come and get it.

KATIE. All right. (*Exit.*)

SALLY. (*At dining-room door*) Do you feel sleepy?

BEMIS. No, I don't.

SALLY. Wait a moment and we'll finish our game. (*Exits dining-room.*)

BEMIS. (*Has a mental struggle with himself*) Mr. Porter. Why did you fire that blonde? (*His hand grasps the front of his coat, and on the words "fire," "that" and "blonde" he is tugging at it as SKEETER did. He realizes what he is doing and rushes up to phone.*) Murray Hill 7439. Yes, please— (*Pause.*) Hello! Is this Mr. Porter's residence? (*Pause.*) Is Mr. Porter there? (*Pause.*) Bemis. (*Pause.*) Bemis, from the office. (*Pause.*) Yes. (*Pause.*) Yes, very important. I've got to speak to him. (*Pause.*) Thanks. (*Pause.*) Hello! Hello, Mr. Porter? This is Bemis. Why, Mr. Porter, I'm sorry I'm calling you up so late. It's just that there's something on my mind and I thought I'd feel better if I called you up about it. I won't keep you but a moment. (*Gulps*) Mr. Porter, you discharged a stenographer yesterday. You know the one I mean? (*Pause.*) Well, I just want you to tell me she didn't do her work right; if that was the reason, then I won't bother you any more. (*SALLY enters from dining room.*) It's this to me: If she was doing her work all right, I want to know why you discharged her! (*Pause. Then mildly*) Well,

I don't mean to be impudent, but you see I'm not exactly a clerk. That just happens to be the job I have. *(Pause.)* What, sir? *(Pause. Then slowly and firmly)* All right, but do you think you was fair to that girl? *(Pause.)* Hello! *(There is no answer and BEMIS hangs up phone.)*

SALLY. What happened? *(He turns and sees her.)*

BEMIS. *(Simply)* He fired me. *(He is above sofa at R.)*

SALLY. That's what I thought.

BEMIS. *(Philosophically)* Yes, sir. He fired me. Not that I blame him much, either. *(Pause.)* Or not that I care a damn. *(He is below R. of sofa. Smiles)* "I don't care a damn." That's it, Sally! *I don't care a damn!*

SALLY. *(Crossing to sofa)* Charley, I can't see a single trace of the man they knew, now.

BEMIS. Don't you?

SALLY. *(She sits on sofa, just at his left)* Not one.

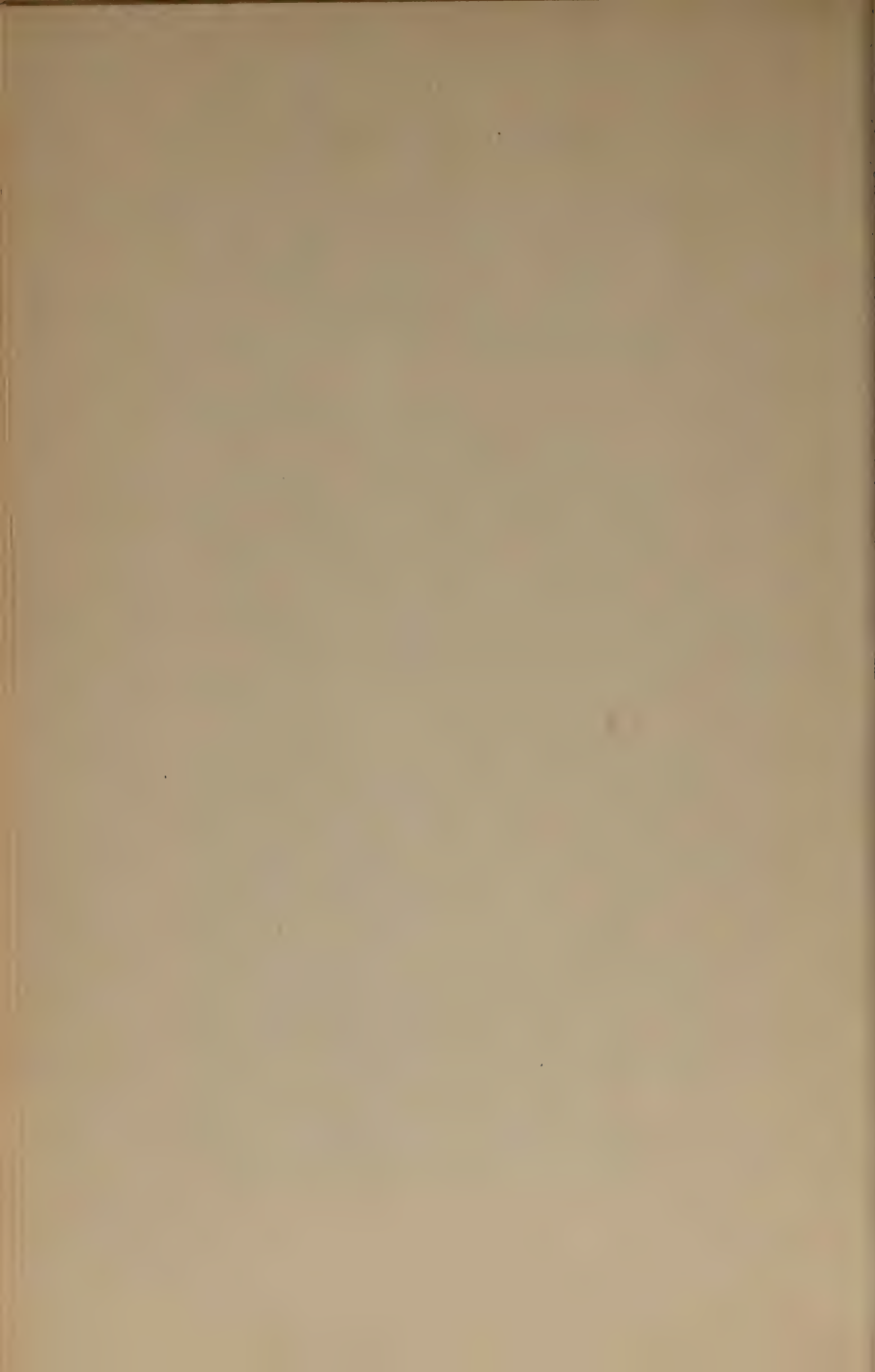
BEMIS. *(After a pause, he glances at door R. of C.)* You know, every word that Farraday said about me was right. I couldn't be sore at him. *(He smiles.)*

SALLY. Of course you couldn't. Charley. *(Pulls at his coat. BEMIS looks around quickly. Looks at his coat, then at her.)* Shall we go on with the game?

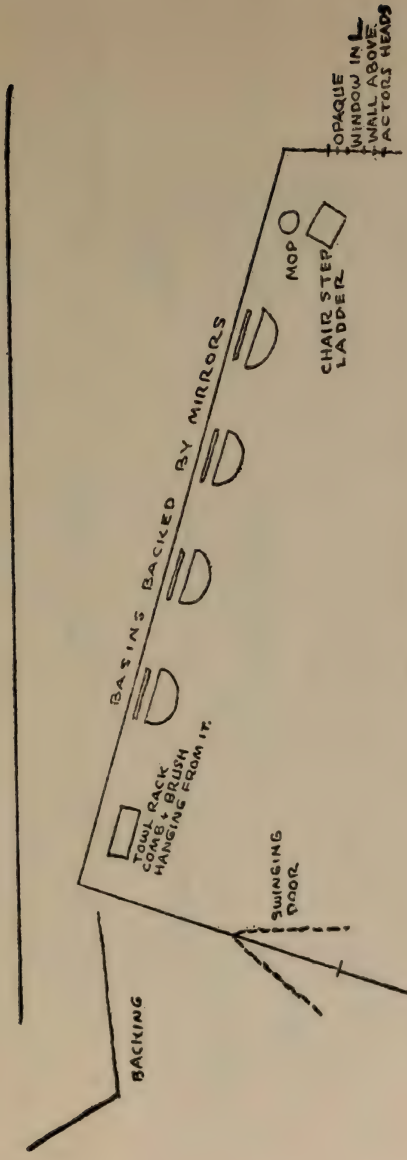
BEMIS. *(Sitting)* All right. You know, I'm going to like this game an awful lot.

SALLY. *(Picking up the cards)* Now I deal out twelve cards. We each get six. Then we keep four and throw two away. They make what is called the crib, and—

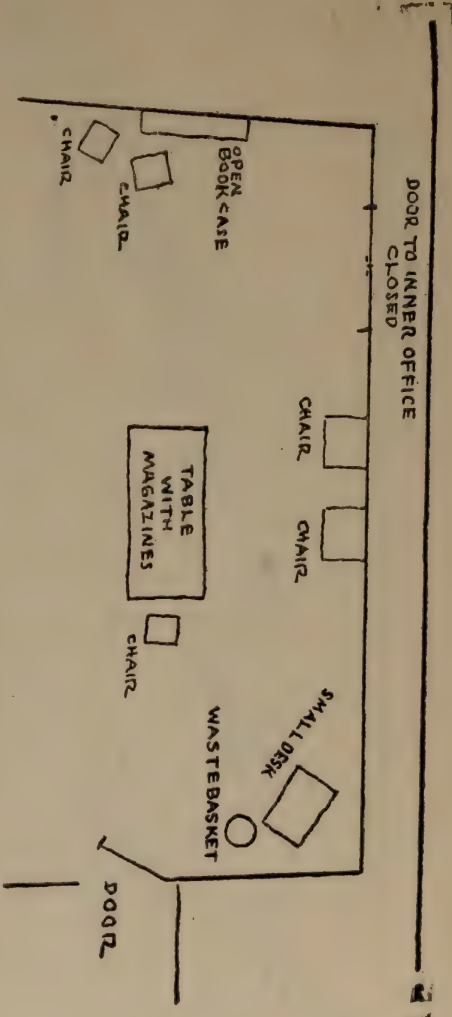
*(The Curtain falls during this speech.)*



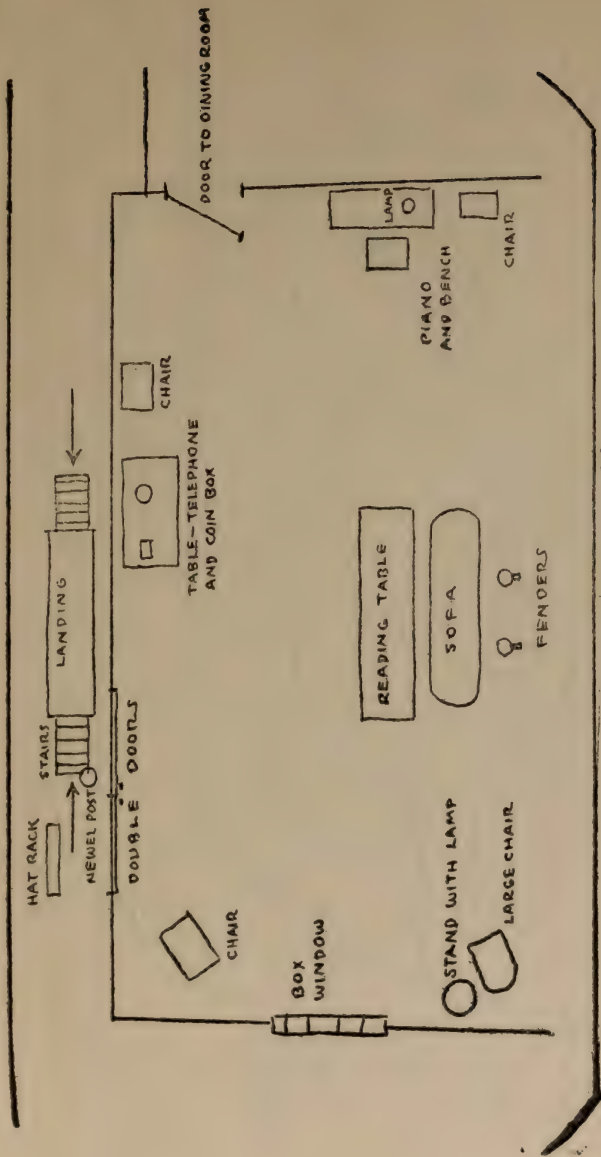




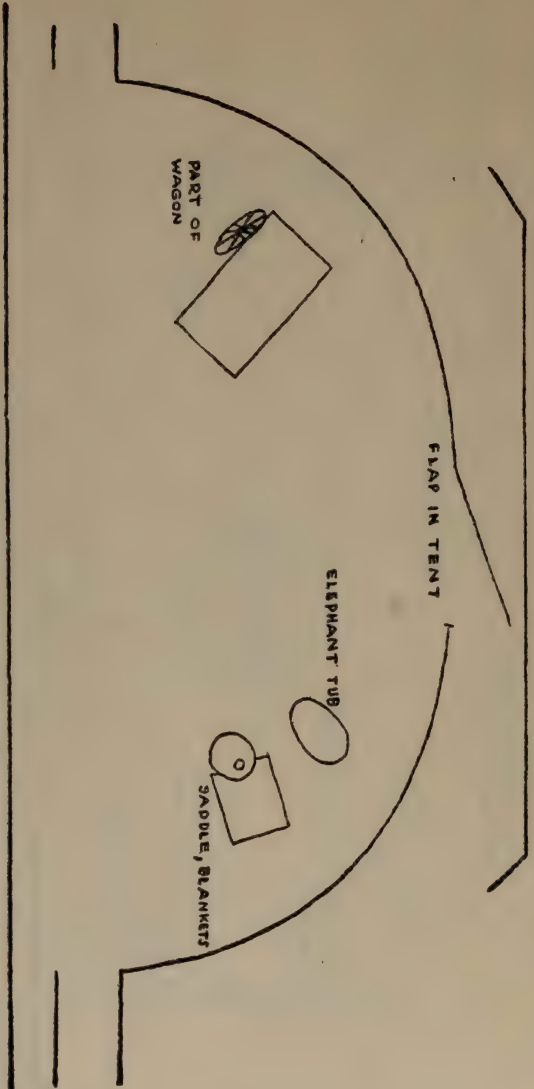
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 THE WISDOM TOOTH  
 ACT I SCENE I.  
 WASHROOM.



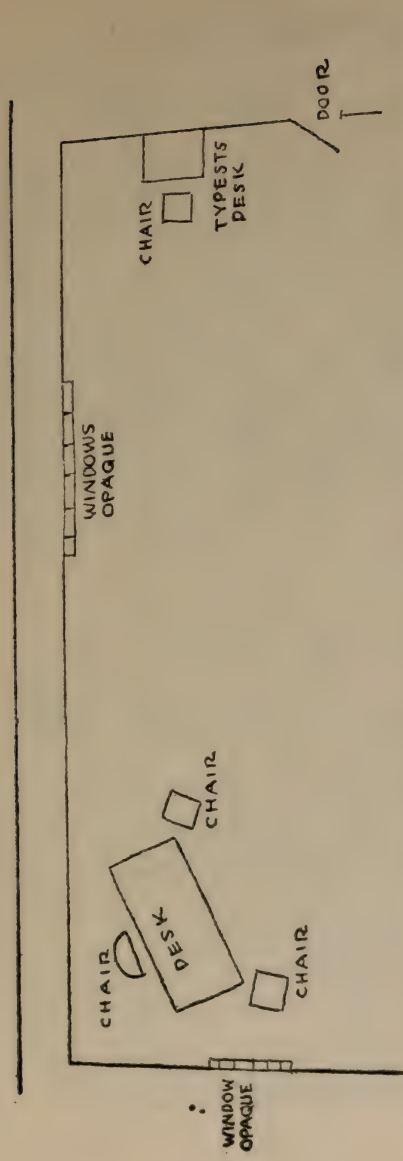
SCENE DESIGN  
 THE WISDOM TOOTH  
 ACT I SCENE 2  
 DENTISTS WAITING ROOM



SCENE DESIGN  
 THE WISDOM TOOTH  
 ACT 1  
 SCENE 3 (ACT 2 SCENE 1 ACT 3)  
 PARLOR IN BOARDINGHOUSE



SCENE DESIGN  
THE WISDOM TOOTH  
ACT II — SCENE II — TENT



SCENE DESIGN  
**THE WISDOM TOOTH**  
 ACT 2 — SCENE 3  
 PORTER'S OFFICE

## TWEEDLES

Comedy in 3 acts, by Booth Tarkington and Harry Leon Wilson. 5 males, 4 females. 1 interior. Costumes, modern. Plays 2½ hours.

Julian, scion of the blue-blooded Castleburys, falls in love with Winsora Tweedle, daughter of the oldest family in a Maine village. The Tweedles esteem the name because it has been rooted in the community for 200 years, and they look down on "summer people" with the vigor that only "summer boarder" communities know.

The Castleburys are aghast at the possibility of a match, and call on the Tweedles to urge how impossible such an alliance would be. Mr. Castlebury laboriously explains the barrier of social caste, and the elder Tweedle takes it that these unimportant summer folk are terrified at the social eminence of the Tweedles.

Tweedle generously agrees to co-operate with the Castleburys to prevent the match. But Winsora brings her father to realize that in reality the Castleburys look upon them as inferiors. The old man is infuriated, and threatens vengeance, but is checkmated when Julian unearths a number of family skeletons and argues that father isn't a Tweedle, since the blood has been so diluted that little remains. Also, Winsora takes the matter into her own hands and outfaces the old man. So the youngsters go forth triumphant. "Tweedles" is Booth Tarkington at his best. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.) Price, 75 Cents.

## JUST SUPPOSE

A whimsical comedy in 3 acts, by A. E. Thomas, author of "Her Husband's Wife," "Come Out of the Kitchen," etc. 6 males, 2 females. 1 interior, 1 exterior. Costumes, modern. Plays 2¼ hours.

It was rumored that during his last visit the Prince of Wales appeared for a brief spell under an assumed name somewhere in Virginia. It is on this story that A. E. Thomas based "Just Suppose." The theme is handled in an original manner. Linda Lee Stafford meets one George Shipley (in reality is the Prince of Wales). It is a case of love at first sight, but, alas, princes cannot select their mates and thereby hangs a tale which Mr. Thomas has woven with infinite charm. The atmosphere of the South with its chivalry dominates the story, touching in its sentiment and lightened here and there with delightful comedy. "Just Suppose" scored a big hit at the Henry Miller Theatre, New York, with Patricia Collinge. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.) Price, 75 Cents.

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## ON THE HIRING LINE

Comedy in 3 acts, by Harvey O'Higgins and Harrier Ford. 5 males, 4 females. Interior throughout. Costumes, modern. Plays 2½ hours.

Sherman Fessenden, unable to induce servants to remain for any reasonable length of time at his home, hits upon the novel expedient of engaging detectives to serve as domestics.

His second wife, an actress, weary of the country and longing for Broadway, has succeeded in discouraging every other cook and butler against remaining long at the house, believing that by so doing she will win her husband to her theory that country life is dead. So she is deeply disappointed when she finds she cannot discourage the new servants.

The sleuths, believing they had been called to report on the actions of those living with the Fessendens, proceeded to warn Mr. Fessenden that his wife has been receiving love-notes from Steve Mark, an actor friend, and that his daughter has been planning to elope with a thief.

One sleuth causes an uproar in the house, making a mess of the situations he has witnessed. Mr. Fessenden, however, has learned a lesson and is quite willing to leave the servant problem to his wife thereafter. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.)

Price, 75 Cents.

## A FULL HOUSE

A farcical comedy in 3 acts. By Fred Jackson. 7 males, 7 females. One interior scene. Modern costumes. Time, 2½ hours.

Imagine a reckless and wealthy youth who writes ardent love letters to a designing chorus girl, an attorney brother-in-law who steals the letters and then gets his hand-bag mixed up with the grip of a burglar who has just stolen a valuable necklace from the mother of the indiscreet youth, and the efforts of the crook to recover his plunder, as incidents in the story of a play in which the swiftness of the action never halts for an instant. Not only are the situations screamingly funny but the lines themselves hold a fund of humor at all times. This newest and cleverest of all farces was written by Fred Jackson, the well-known short-story writer, and is backed up by the prestige of an impressive New York success and the promise of unlimited fun presented in the most attractive form. A cleaner, cleverer farce has not been seen for many a long day. "A Full House" is a house full of laughs. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.)

Price, 75 Cents.

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## DADDY LONG-LEGS

A charming comedy in 4 acts. By Jean Webster. The full cast calls for 6 males, 7 females and 6 orphans, but the play, by the easy doubling of some of the characters, may be played by 4 males, 4 females and 3 orphans. The orphans appear only in the first act and may be played by small girls of any age. Four easy interior scenes. Costumes modern. Plays 2½ hours.

Many readers of current fiction will recall Jean Webster's "Daddy Long-Legs." Miss Webster dramatized her story and it was presented at the Gaiety Theatre in New York, under Henry Miller's direction, with Ruth Chatterton in the principal rôle. "Daddy Long-Legs" tells the story of Judy, a pretty little drudge in a bleak New England orphanage. One day, a visiting trustee becomes interested in Judy and decides to give her a chance. She does not know the name of her benefactor, but simply calls him Daddy Long-Legs, and writes him letters brimming over with fun and affection. From the Foundling's Home she goes to a fashionable college for girls and there develops the romance that constitutes much of the play's charm. The New York *Times* reviewer, on the morning after the Broadway production, wrote the following: "If you will take your pencil and write down, one below the other, the words delightful, charming, sweet, beautiful and entertaining, and then draw a line and add them up, the answer will be 'Daddy Long-Legs.' To that result you might even add brilliant, pathetic and humorous, but the answer even then would be just what it was before—the play which Miss Jean Webster has made from her book, 'Daddy Long-Legs,' and which was presented at the Gaiety last night. To attempt to describe the simplicity and beauty of 'Daddy Long-Legs' would be like attempting to describe the first breath of Spring after an exceedingly tiresome and hard Winter." "Daddy Long-Legs" enjoyed a two-years' run in New York, and was then toured for over three years. It is now published in play form for the first time. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.) Price, 75 Cents.

## THE FAMOUS MRS. FAIR

A comedy in 4 acts. By James Forbes. 3 males, 10 females. 2 interiors. Modern costumes. Plays a full evening.

An absorbing play of modern American family life. "The Famous Mrs. Fair" is concerned with a strenuous lady who returns from overseas to lecture, and consequently neglects her daughter, who is just saved in time from disaster. Acted with great success by Blanche Bates and Henry Miller. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.) Price, 75 Cents.

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## ARE YOU A MASON?

Farce in 3 acts. By Lee Dittrichstein. 7 males, 7 females. Modern costumes. Plays 2¼ hours. 1 interior.

"Are You a Mason?" is one of those delightful farces Miss "Charley's Aunt" that are always fresh. "A mother and a daughter," says the critic of the *New York Herald*, "had husbands who account for absences from the joint household on frequent evenings, falsely pretending to be Masons. The men do not know each other's duplicity, and each tells his wife of having advanced to leadership in his lodge. The older woman was so well pleased with her husband's supposed distinction in the order that she made him promise to put up the name of a visiting friend for membership. Further perplexity over the principal liar arose when a suitor for his second daughter's hand proved to be a real Mason. . . . To tell the story of the play would require volumes, its complications are so numerous. It is a house of cards. One card wrongly placed and the whole thing would collapse. But it stands, an example of remarkable ingenuity. You wonder at the end of the first act how the fun can be kept up on such a slender foundation. But it continues and grows to the last curtain." One of the most hilariously amusing farces ever written, especially suited to schools and Masonic Lodges. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.) Price, 75 Cents.

## KEMPY

A delightful comedy in 3 acts. By J. C. Nugent and Elliott Nugent. 4 males, 4 females. 1 interior throughout. Costumes, modern. Plays 2¼ hours.

No wonder "Kempy" has been such a tremendous hit in New York, Chicago—wherever it has played. It snaps with wit and humor of the most delightful kind. It's electric. It's small-town folk perfectly pictured. Full of types of varied sorts, each one done to a turn and served with zestful sauce. An ideal entertainment for amusement purposes. The story is about a high-salutin' daughter who in a fit of pique marries the young plumber-architect, who comes to fix the water pipes, just because he "understands" her—having read her book and having sworn to marry the authoress. But in that story lies all the humor that kept the audience laughing every second of every act. Of course there are lots of ramifications, each of which bears its own brand of laughter-making potentials. But the plot and the story are not the main things. There is, for instance, the work of the company. The fun growing out of this family mixup is lively and clean. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.) Price, 75 Cents.

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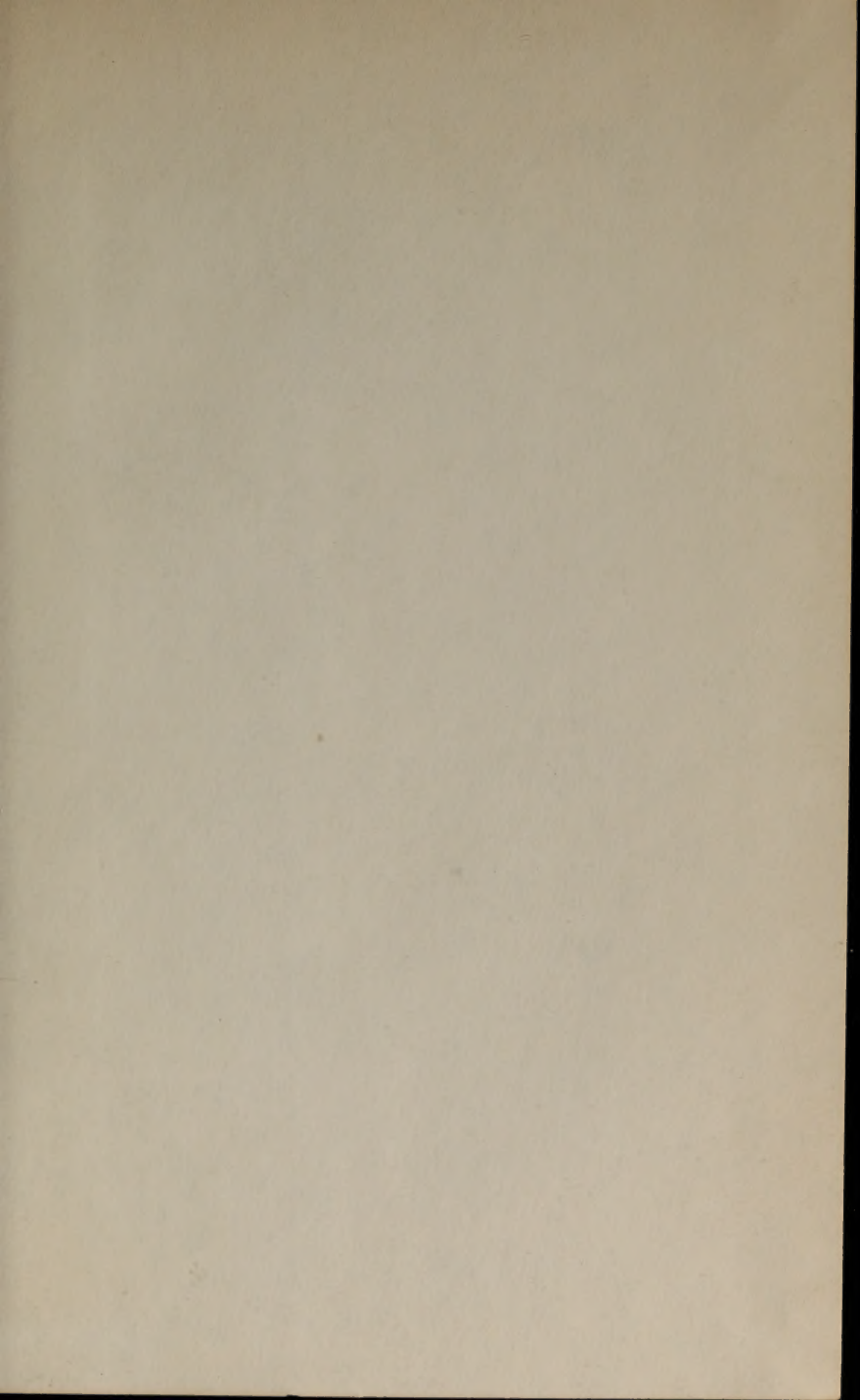
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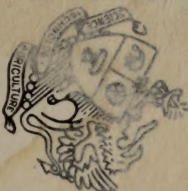


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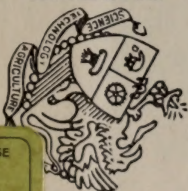


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